

VILLALOBOS GANG GANG DANCE CARIBOU ANTON CORBIJN COBBLESTONE JAZZ MIKE GIANT

# XLR8R

112  
NOVEMBER  
2007

ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE



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PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY EISBERG

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## ED'S RANT UNDER CONTROL



Narod Niki at MUTEK, 2003 (photo by Caroline Hayeur)

MUTEK Montreal, 2003. It was the last evening of programming—a Sunday night (er, Monday morning) sometime around 3 a.m.—and we were sweating like hogs at the city's Metropolis club. By this point, Narod Niki—the nine-member techno juggernaut of Daniel Bell, Luciano, Ricardo Villalobos, Richie Hawtin, Zip, Monolake, Dandy Jack, Cabanne, and Akufen—had been plowing through three hours of their first-ever performance—an on-stage, linked-up collaboration of eight laptops running eight slightly-out-of-sync versions of Ableton Live, with one mixer and one occasional vocalist. Jon Berry (then a label rep for Force Inc./Mille Plateaux, now in marketing at Kompakt) turned to me in a haze and screamed, “THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO HAPPEN TO TECHNO IN 10 YEARS!” I smiled and nodded, not quite realizing how prophetic his words were.

Back then, laptops still looked a little out of place on the stage. Sure they were slowly replacing turntables and synthesizers, but we weren't quite *there* yet. But a few years later, live performance has grown by leaps and bounds—not only have laptops become as ubiquitous on stages as beer bottles and tangles of cords, but we're actually getting a little bored with them.

So what do we do now?

If there's a common thread that runs throughout this Music Technology issue, it's the idea that we've finally learned to control all of our gear and interfaces, and now it's time to put them into action in new, fascinating, entertaining ways.

In our 'Techno Goes Live' feature, we look at how some of electronic music's most interesting characters have re-sculpted their sound for the stage—or, in the case of Villalobos, London's famed Fabric soundsystem. Writer Jesse Serwer traveled to Norway's Oya Festival to check out Bjørn Torske's new live set-up, which involves a Polyphonic Spree-style chorus of 13 men, women, and melodicas. Cobblestone Jazz lets us in on the secrets of bringing one of the year's most anticipated full-lengths to the live venue. Montreal's Megasoid gets hyphy with their mobile soundsystem. Cover boys Modeselektor bring the rave to a speeding car, while bands like Gang Gang Dance and Skeletons and the Kings of All Cities blur the line between aural and visual art.

Even this magazine is proof that we're taking technology to the next level. Not only have we switched to beautiful 100% recycled paper but we've also redesigned and relaunched XLR8R.com, with an unfathomable amount of features, exclusives, and free downloads. We hope you like the look and feel of our new print and online portals, and that we continue to be your guide to keeping it all under control.

—Ken Taylor, Managing Editor

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Modeselektor photographed by Birgit Kauffuss



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### JOE COLLY

Joe Colly is a Brooklyn-based editor and freelance writer. Before relocating to New York a few years ago, he narrowly escaped becoming an attorney in his hometown of Washington, DC. Since then, Joe's been on staff at *Flavorpill* and *Gotham* magazine, and his music writing has appeared in *Radar*, *Anthem*, and *Earplug*. In this issue, he chats with renowned photographer Anton Corbijn about his Ian Curtis biopic *Control*. Someday, Joe would really like to own a French bulldog.



### RYAN RAYHILL

Ryan Rayhill is best known for his acumen as a sniper, but his dalliances with buxom Hollywood starlets and Mafioso elbow-rubbing are what earned him a place in the tabloids... and our hearts. He's also the contributing editor for our new videogames section. Cutting his teeth on *Combat* and *Missile Command*, the NYC-based Rayhill now splits his time between *World of Warcraft* and his band, Blacklist.  
[www.myspace.com/blacklistmusic](http://www.myspace.com/blacklistmusic)



### BIRGIT KAULFUSS

30-year-old Birgit Kaulfuss was born in East Germany and now works and lives in Berlin with her one-year-old son. For her eighth birthday, her parents bought Birgit her first camera, and she's been unable to be without one at her side ever since. As a change from her regular fashion-shooting gigs, the spontaneity-loving Birgit photographed this issue's cover stars Modeselektor on location in Berlin.  
[www.birgitkaulfuss.com](http://www.birgitkaulfuss.com)



### MICHELLE TEN

NYC-based stylist Michelle Ten knew from a very early age that she wanted to work in fashion; she used to cut out her favorite styles from *Vogue* and *Minabella* and put them into a photo album that she called her "personal magazine." Ten received double degrees in the fashion field and worked as fashion editor of *The Source* before starting her own company, Missfit Styles, Inc. She styled this issue's Shopgirls feature.

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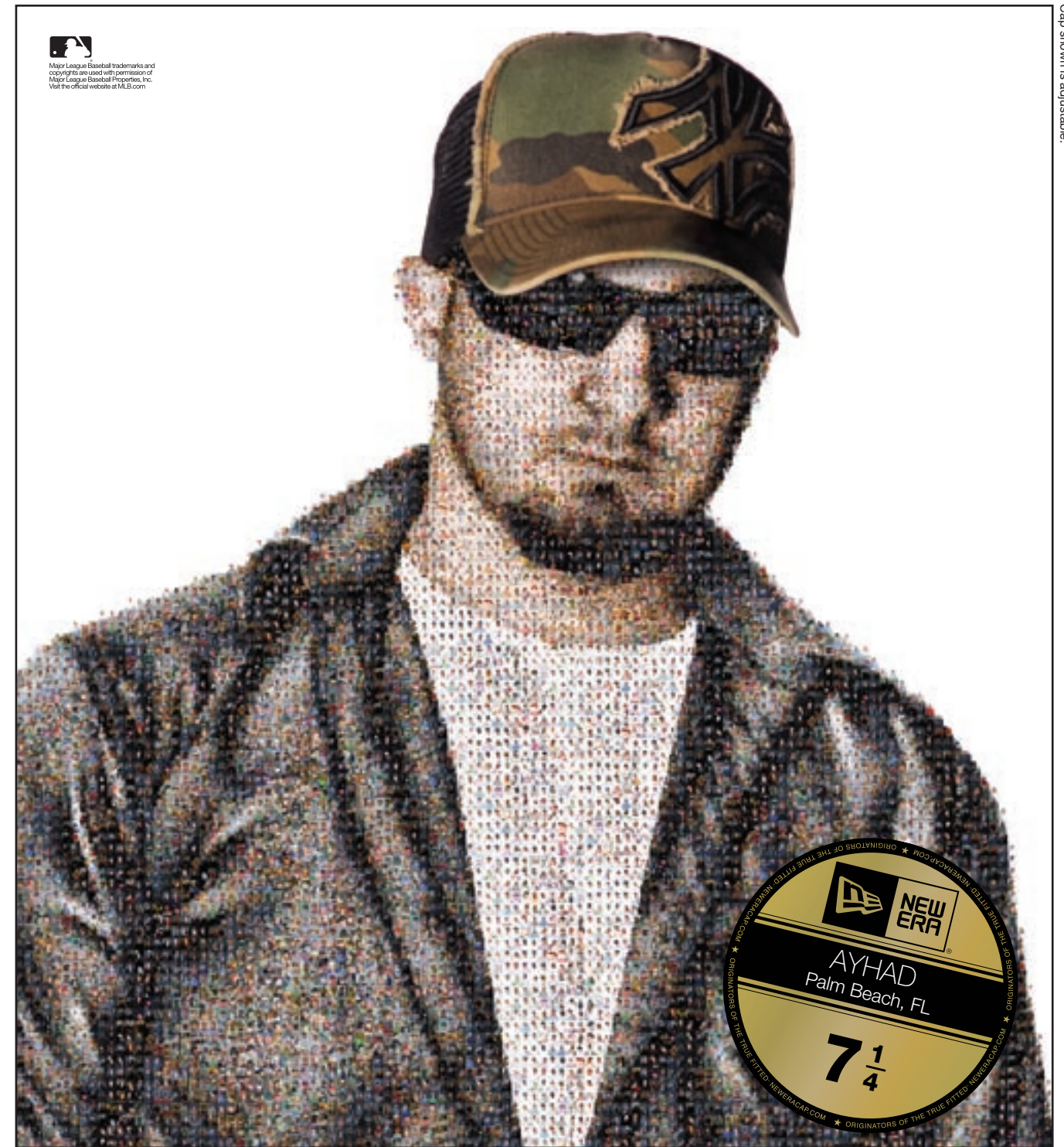
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Got something to say? Love us? Hate us? Write us at [letterbox@xlr8r.com](mailto:letterbox@xlr8r.com) or send mail to *XLR8R* Magazine, 1388 Haight Street #105, San Francisco CA 94117.



September Issue #110



October Issue #111

### He Got Game

Dear *XLR8R*ers,

In a letter published in *XLR8R* #110, a reader named Stewart felt the need to rail against your recent inclusion of videogame reviews. I for one do not “live with my mother” or “get off” on playing videogames, but I do like playing them *and* I like the music you cover. I’m sure I’m not alone. If your magazine is “accelerating music *and* culture,” why not include videogames, fashion, or tech stuff? If anything, I say add more (like film reviews for instance). Stewart: Get with the times, my friend. Get with the times.

Sincerely,

Josh Wolfe

### Style Counsel

I loved your last issue (Issue #110, September), especially the Turf Talk article, but shouldn’t your Style Issue have a little more to do with, uh, style? I understand that all of the features had to do with stylish artists, but it would be tight if in the future you just did features on fashion or on artist’s fashion (like the Les Savy Fav bit). I like the small pieces on design and fashion so do it up for the whole issue for once.

Peace,

Ronnie, via the web

### Not Just Guitar Feedback

Hey *XLR8R* dudes,

I’d love to see some features on more experimental/ambient artists. You review those type of albums here and there so why not spread the knowledge on some of the bigger artists in the genre? I’m sure some of them have some pretty wacky, theoretical ideas on music that would be interesting to read about.

Thanks!

Susan, via the web

### Jah Bless

*XLR8R* rocks! I pick it up every chance I get. Keep up the awesome music reviews and articles! Love that you incorporate a lot of reggae!

One love,

SoulJah Productions, via *XLR8R*’s MySpace page

### Hitting Bedrock

Dear sirs,

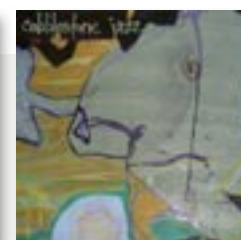
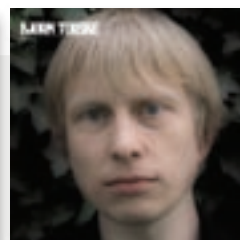
We have found out about a book *Bedroom Rockers: Where DJs Call Home* recently. Unfortunately we can’t find it at e-shops (Amazon, eBay, etc.). Are there any chances to buy it? Hope you can provide us any info. Thanks in advance!

Your reader from Russia,

Ilya Voronin, via the web

### Jennifer responds:

Thanks for writing. Unfortunately, *Bedroom Rockers* is only available at Adidas Originals stores throughout the U.S.



## XLR8R’S “GET LIVE” CONTEST

Pick up a copy of Ableton Live 6 LE and a clutch of new music.

From taking killer new albums to the stage to mastering high-tech gear, the artists featured in this issue all have a unique approach to gettin’ live. Here’s your chance to get Live, too. For our November contest, four winners will grab prize packs that include a copy of the amazing Ableton Live 6 LE (which received high praise in this issue’s Machines section), plus Bjørn Torske’s *Feil Knapp* (Smalltown Supersound), Cobblestone Jazz’s *23 Seconds* (IK7), Modeselektor’s *Happy Birthday!* (BPitch Control), and Sally Shapiro’s *Disco Romance* (Paper Bag).

**All you’ve gotta do is** tell us, in 100 words or less, about your favorite live show of all time. The best answers win the prizes above.

**Four winners will receive:** A copy of Ableton Live 6 LE and each of the CDs shown above.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. Entries must be received by December 11, 2007. Send your entry to *XLR8R*’s “Get Live Contest,” 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with “*XLR8R*’s Get Live Contest” in the subject line.



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## BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S FREAKS OF THE INDUSTRY

Before penning this column for *XLR8R*, BJ "Bitter" Bastard had a brief stint in PR for the tech industry. BJ quickly became reviled for getting inappropriately wasted at industry events and always eating the last bagel at lunchtime meetings. BJ's fast-rising star was finally felled following an ill-timed lampoon sent out about a Sennheiser senior staffer. BJ misses the old job—to the extent of rewriting every gear-related press release we get just for fun. You don't know what you've been missing until you check this inspired commentary on 2008's new tech-world announcements.



### 1. No competition for VERSUS' intercom system!

NEWYORK, NY: October 5, 2007. It has just been announced that Riedel Communications' state-of-the-art Artist Digital Matrix Intercom System will be the heart of VERSUS' communications system in Stamford, CT. "What truly sold me was when I put the headset on and listened to the quality of production," says Paul Koopmann, director of engineering for VERSUS, a cable television sports network owned by Comcast. What really sold me is Riedel's commitment to lookin' good during the installation process—wedgie shorts, plumber's crack, and all.

### 2. Allen & Heath names new Chinese distributor.

CORNWALL, UK: July 11, 2007. To prove its dedication to sanity, British mixer manufacturer Allen & Heath has appointed Sanecore Limited as its new distributor in China. In January, a temporary deal was struck between A&H and another distributor, the Shenzhen-based Insanecore, but it was nixed after allegations of Falun Gong-bashing and illegal organ harvesting

surfaced from the Insanecore camp. A&H was looking for a younger, more motivated and peace-loving distro staff. "[With] Sanecore, these criteria were not just met but exceeded," comments Bardy Hayes, A&H's Asia regional sales manager.

### 3. Benton's box is on Fire!

BATON ROUGE, LA: Sept. 4, 2007. Katelyn Benton sure loves her FireBox. You can see it in her omniscient eyes, sensuous lips, and casually tousled locks. It's no wonder that PreSonus Audio Electronics is "pleased to announce" Ms. Benton's new role as the company's Marketing Communications Associate. Hot mamacitas are a dime a dozen in audio-tech circles, but this Benton—she is on some next-level babe-itude. "I am thrilled to be a part of the company," says Benton. I am too.

### 4. "Loco" puts it in motion.

DALY CITY, CA: Sept. 5, 2007. Since announcing Frank Loyko's appointment to Worldwide Director of Sales for the Digidesign® VENUE line, things have been a bit different around the water cooler. For starters, the entire sales team has been forced

to grow soul patches (even the babes!)... and then there are the nicknames. Frankie insists on everyone having nicknames—or should we say, Frankie "Loco in Tokyo" Loyko insists on nicknames. (Like, *break-your-legs* and *no-lunch-break* insists.) Still, sales and productivity are through the roof!

### 5. Sennheiser's new "head" of western region sales.

OLD LYME, CT: July 23, 2007. If there's one thing to be said about Thom Salisbury, it's that he's got a head for business. It's a head that makes you want to laugh and cry and go "whooo!" like Cuba Gooding Jr. does at the end of *Jerry Maguire*. In his new role as Western Regional Sales Manager at Sennheiser Electronics, Thom (who changed his name to the "Th" spelling after hearing *Kid A*, his totes fave Radiohead album) will be responsible for sales and marketing and stuff.



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# EDIT

AN EX-IDM PRODUCER OVERHAULS AIR-RAID SIRENS FROM HIS L.A. BUNKER.

Edward “edIT” Ma has a couple different explanations for what his new album, *Certified Air Raid Material*, is really about: “The name is derived from the idea that I’m dropping bombs on the dancefloor with every track,” he offers. “Since this music is a physical audio experience, it is best experienced in a club with a killer soundsystem, and a club ain’t hoppin’ without a good crowd... This album is really dancefloor music for the people to rock out to.”

Version two gets a little more technical: “The beats are really raw,” he says of his instrumental workouts and collaborations with Busdriver, TTC, and The Grouch. “The album is presented in a format that caters to DJs to essentially rip the CD and play it in Serato,” he adds.

edIT may be a new name on the scene, but Ma is no greenhorn. Originally known as Conartist, Ma has thrived on the DJ circuit for much of the past decade. He was a resident at the gone-but-not-forgotten junglist/hip-hop haven Konkrete Jungle, hosted shows on Dublab Radio, and produced beats for Busdriver’s *Temporary Forever* and Sole’s *Uck Ri*. Switching his name to edIT, he made his debut album, *Crying Over Pros for No Reason*, for Planet Mu in 2004. It was, in edIT’s words, “an attempt to make an electronic/hip-hop album, but in a really mellow vein. It’s all just shoegazer indie-rock elements mixed with hip-hop beats and electronic/glitch-hop sounds.”

*Crying Over Pros for No Reason* might be an anomaly in his catalog, so for a truer edIT experience, check out his free

online mix commissioned for Hefy Records’ 10th anniversary last year, where he spliced sounds from Slicker and Telefon Tel Aviv with the familiar rhymes of E-40 and Mike Jones. Or you could just listen closely to the TV—Ma, who works for advertising agency Face the Music, has composed TV-commercial soundtracks for Mercedes-Benz and Burger King.

edIT may be precariously positioned at the crossroads between esoteric strains of dance music and catchy club beats, but he’s got back-up from the Glitch Mob. The DJ crew—formed with Ma’s friends Josh “Ooah” Mayer, Justin Boreta, and Matthew “Kradly” Kratz—is known for rocking large, populist festivals (including Burning Man, Nocturnal Wonderland, and Pop Montreal) with their live tag-team sets, which blend crunk, hyphy, nu-breaks, and glitch together in unexpected combinations. The outfit has recently launched its own label, Glitch Mob Unlimited, to further their experiments in musical cross-pollination. “The main thing that people can get from it,” says edIT, “is that it’s just dope dance music.”

**edIT’s *Certified Air Raid Material* is out now on Alpha Pup. [www.myspace.com/edit](http://www.myspace.com/edit)**





Photo by Milo Schahman



Photo by Kevin Burnett



Photo by Diego Ballezo



Photo by Anders Stenmarck

Clockwise from top left: DJs Uter and Daleduro, ORO11, El Remolón, Villa Diamante

## SOMEWHERE: BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

A new breed of the long-reviled *cumbia* genre is making its way to the city's fashionable dancefloors.

Until recently, *cumbia* has been anything but cool in Buenos Aires. For decades, Argentinian trendsetters wanted no part of this traditional folk-dance music of Colombian origin. With its repetitive percussion, cheesy keyboards, and trite lyrics, *cumbia* was often dismissed as music for the lower classes and the rural areas outside of Buenos Aires.

That perception was only strengthened by the emergence of *cumbia villera*, a harder-edged style that emerged from the villas of Buenos Aires in the midst of the economic crisis that began in 1998 and peaked in 2002. The lyrics horrified mainstream Argentinians with lurid tales of crime, drug use, and cheap women.

Despite the unfriendly climate, a new crop of Buenos Aires *cumbia* DJs and producers has recently emerged with a different perspective. Growing up in a country where traditional *cumbia* was banished to family parties and kiddie dances, musicians are now mixing *cumbia* rhythms with modern hip-hop and electronic sounds. Cobbling together tracks on crappy PCs with pirated music software, these bedroom artists operate in a world where CD-Rs constitute an official release and producers scour open-air bootleg markets in search of new sampling material. Dubbed new-school *cumbia*, *cumbia* beat, electro *cumbia*, and *cumbiatronica*, their work is being embraced by the hipster set.

Local dubstep/grime wizard Daleduro cites something he calls the "M.I.A. phenomenon" as being responsible for the style's emergence, and explains: "In 2005, there was a global movement to look to the third world

for new kinds of beats. In Buenos Aires that manifested [itself] as people taking a look at *cumbia*."

Daleduro fuses *cumbia* rhythms into his bass-heavy beats, and he's not alone. Northern California transplant Oro11, who first discovered *cumbia* on a garish Saturday-afternoon television variety show, crafts a unique mix of *cumbia* with hip-hop and dancehall. More experimental offerings come from producer El Remolón, who puts the genre into an IDM framework, while fusing *cumbia* with minimal techno is the preferred formula for Marcelo Fabian, who also happens to be producing the new album from local reggaeton/dancehall MC Princesa.

Last year these artists found a home with the launch of Zizek, a weekly urban beats club that now takes place at the venerable Niceto Club in the city's ultra-trendy Palermo neighborhood. Serving as the city's unofficial *cumbia* clubhouse, Zizek is one of the few places to escape *punchi punchi*, the omnipresent Euro-dance music that dominates the Buenos Aires club scene.

Zizek cofounder Grant Dull, who also runs bilingual website WhatsUpBuenosAires.com, states that the club is "a platform for a new generation of Buenos Aires clubbers to hear *cumbia*." When asked why the music is making such strides, he answers, "*Cumbia* is taking shape as post-crisis Buenos Aires realizes that it's actually part of Latin America." Shawn Reynaldo

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## WHAT IS IT? NERDCORE

Geeks shall inherit the earth... or at least a little piece of hip-hop.

Not so long ago, hackers listened to Skinny Puppy and could barely get a date through the S&M BBS. But these days, a dude like YT Cracker is just as likely to be famous for his lyrical prowess as he is for digitally invading NASA's data systems.

Hacker-turned-rapper YT (born Bryce Case) is not bummed about being called a nerd—actually, he revels in it, like nearly all his contemporaries in the niche genre known as nerdcore. A subset of hip-hop created almost entirely by white, middle-class rappers, nerdcore's chief attribute is that it celebrates geek culture, exploring topics once reserved for solely for listservs, ComicCon, and dorm rooms. And the seemingly endless minutiae of geekdom—from obscure *Star Wars* characters to anime, computer coding slang to the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebook—makes for good rhymes in Instant Messenger rap battles.

Combining pocket-protector culture with hip-hop may be a first, but being overtly nerdy in music isn't a new concept—"Weird Al" Yankovic, They Might Be Giants, and white alterna-rap personalities like Brown alum MC Paul Barman and the stealing-obsessed Thirstin Howell III (sort of) did it first. But unlike other left-of-center rappers, nerdcore MCs don't seem to have any trouble getting press. The genre has been written about in *Wired* and the *New York Times*, broadcast on CNET and CNN; it has as two documentaries devoted to it (*Nerdcore For Life* and *Nerdcore Rising*), not to mention various podcasts, record labels,

an online magazine (*Nerdy Mag*), a social networking site (Nerdcore Por Vida), and even a clothing line.

It would be easy to write this all off as a joke, but while the rhymes aren't serious, the MCs themselves are, at least about developing their own style and persona. MC Frontalot, who defined the subculture with 2000's "Nerdcore Hip-Hop," crams tons of words into raps about goth girls and text-adventure games; his look is strictly '70s math teacher while his quirky cadences are reminiscent of Kool Keith or late-'90s Anticon MCs. Seattle's Optimus Rhyme combines the *Transformers*-referencing rhymes of MCs Wheelie Cyberman and Broken English with a jam-band-esque backdrop, while renegade frat-boy MC Lars takes philosophy and pop culture to task like an overeager freshman. Self-proclaimed "first lady of nerdcore" MC Router, her voice like a 12-year-old boy, raps about *Halo 2* over clever 8-bit beats from producer T-Byte. And one must not forget the cough-syrup-celebrating, potty-mouthed MC Chris, known for rhyming in the same high-pitched tone he uses to voice characters on Cartoon Network's *Adult Swim*.

Though it will never have the selling power of 50 Cent (most of the tracks are downloaded for free via artists' websites and P2P networks), nerdcore is at least allowing a handful of programmers to legitimately live out their music fantasies—sex, drugs, and rock & roll probably not included. *Allura Dannon Illustration by Trophy*

# SALLY SHAPIRO

A SWEDISH DISCO DOLLY STEPS OUT FROM BEHIND THE VELVET CURTAIN... ALMOST.

To call Sally Shapiro “mysterious” is a bit of an understatement. The Swedish electro-pop singer refuses to divulge her real name or age, has never performed live, and insists that we conduct our interview via Instant Messenger. (She blames her infamous timidity and unconfident grasp of English for this decision.) Sally also exclusively collaborates with producer Johan Agebjörn, who has effortlessly carved her icy vocals and bubbly demeanor into perfect slabs of sophisticated Europop.

A childhood fan of Swedish pop artists like Lena Philipson and Lili & Sussie, Shapiro jumped at the opportunity to begin a musical project when Agebjörn approached her. “Johan told me that I had an ‘Italo-disco’ voice, although I wasn’t familiar with the term back then,” she admits.

“Johan ‘discovered’ me when we were singing Christmas carols together,” she explains. “It was just for fun. It was in December and we had a nice, funny time in front of the piano.” Even across the cold 1s and 0s of the internet, one can feel the warmth and creative intimacy between the pair. Shapiro is surprisingly candid about their musical relationship: She provides the themes and he puts them into words and music. “For ‘Find My Soul,’ I wanted him to write about how it is to have a boyfriend that doesn’t understand you,” Shapiro informs. “I also pointed out that the album should be disco. [Otherwise] a lot of the music would have [had a] house or electro touch.”

The record in question, *Disco Romance*, was originally intended as just a single, entitled “I’ll Be by Your Side.” “We were shocked by the positive response we got. We only expected a handful of Italo-disco nerds to like it,” says Shapiro. The album, Shapiro’s first, pays homage to Italo acts of the past while keeping in line with the current Europop-influenced artists such as Lindstrom and Michael Mayer. Just about every track combines heavy synths and processed dance beats with Shapiro’s sexy-sweet vocals and lyrics, conjuring a dreamy soundscapes akin to twilight raves on Scandinavian fjords.

“I like the sound of cool electronic bands with girl vocals, like Ladytron [and] Chicks on Speed.” says Shapiro who is also strongly influenced by sultry French ‘90s pop star Mylène Farmer. “She is great! My favorite!” she exclaims. “Mylène has a huge influence on me. I often listen to her before I record to get into the right mood.” Surely, someone is doing the same with *Disco Romance* right now.

Sally Shapiro’s *Disco Romance* is out now on Paper Bag Records.  
[www.myspace.com/shapirosally](http://www.myspace.com/shapirosally)



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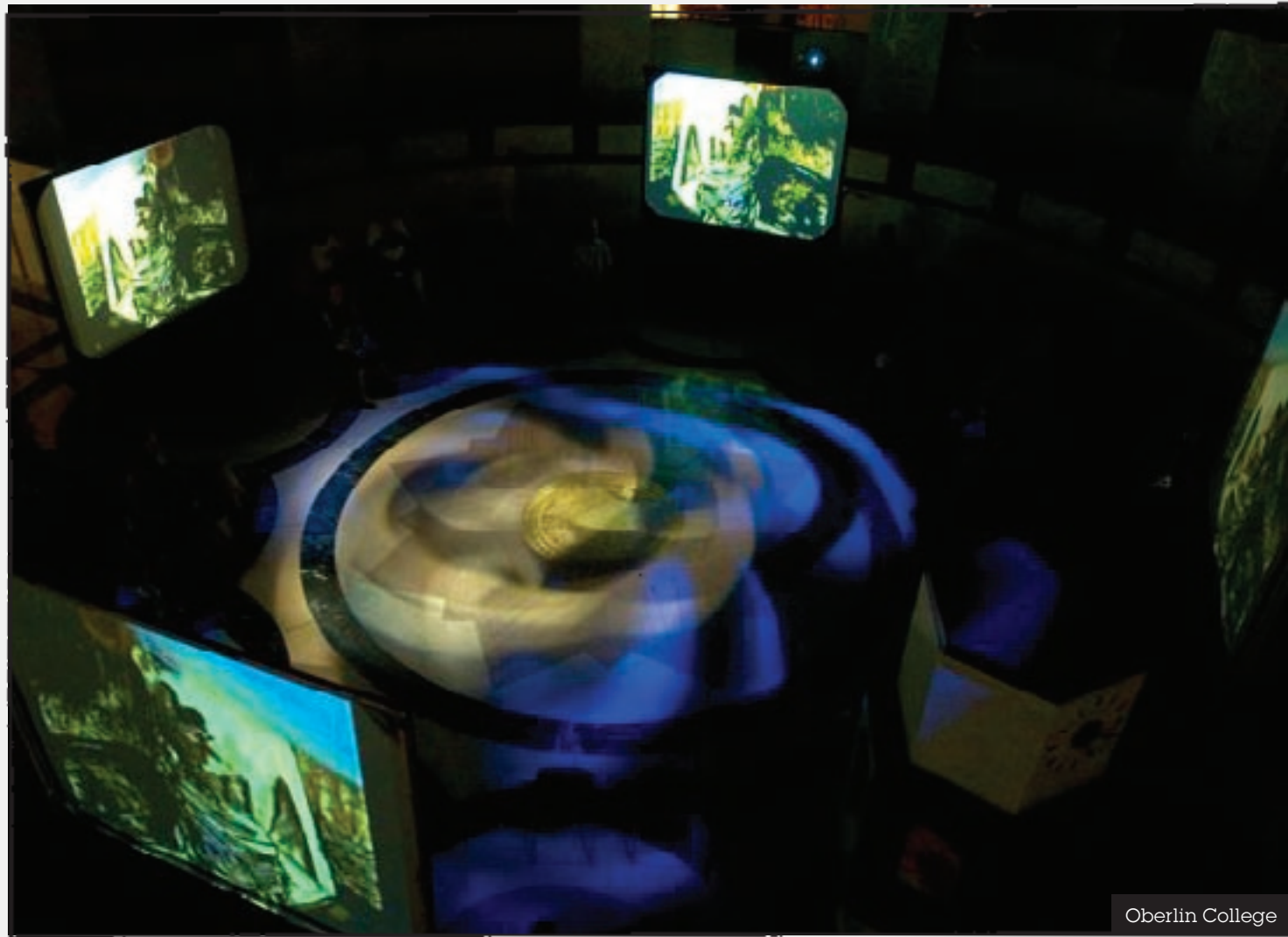
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Oberlin College

## CLASS ACTS

A quick look at five of the country's top schools for electronic and experimental music.

### OBERLIN COLLEGE'S TECHNOLOGY IN MUSIC AND RELATED ARTS DEPT. (TIMARA) Oberlin, OH

One of the country's most prestigious music schools, Oberlin College's TIMARA program encourages students to "compose for computer, perform via multiple speakers, collaborate with highly talented musicians, dancers, actors, and artists, and develop a powerful, unique personal voice," says Tom Lopez, Program Chair and Associate Professor of Computer Music and Digital Arts. Bob Ostertag and Cory Arcangel once roamed the school's halls.

**Today's Guests:** Morton Subotnick, Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Olga Neuwirth, Alvin Lucier, Iannis Xenakis.  
**Drool-worthy Gear:** A Digidesign ICON system with 32 channels of Grace mic preamps and Apogee A/D conversion; performance instruments include a Yamaha MIDI grand piano, Zeta string quartet, MalletKAT MIDI percussion, and a JazzMutant Lemur MIDI controller, plus vintage synths and equipment.  
[www.timara.oberlin.edu](http://www.timara.oberlin.edu)

### MILLS COLLEGE'S CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC (CCM) Oakland, CA

The granddaddy of experimental and electronic music programs, Mills College's Center for Contemporary Music was established in 1966 when the San Francisco Tape Music Center moved to Mills College. Its first co-directors were Pauline Oliveros and Anthony Martin and its faculty has since grown to include everyone from Maggi Payne and Henry Cow's Fred Frith (both currently on staff) to John Cage, Cecil Taylor, and Björk collaborator Zeena Parkins. Mills is also a huge draw for female composers (thanks to its all-women undergrad student body), not to mention being Joanna Newsom's alma mater.

**In the Yearbook:** Christopher Willits, Gregg Kowalsky, Blectum from Blechdom, Laetitia Sonami, Steve Reich.  
**Drool-worthy Gear:** The first Buchla 100 synthesizer and a Moog IIP.  
[www.mills.edu](http://www.mills.edu)



Mills College



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Evergreen College



Evergreen College

### EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE'S MUSIC TECHNOLOGY IN THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS DEPT. Olympia, WA

Started in the early '70s, the Music Technology program at Evergreen takes a "highly integrated approach to using technology for creative ends," says Peter Randlette, Head of Electronic Media at the school. "Our curriculum is very hands-on, and we have an excellent set of studios, which combine classical analog and current digital technologies."

**In the Yearbook:** Engineer Stuart Hallerman, producer and Pell Mell member Steve Fisk, K Records' and Dub Narcotic Sound System's Calvin Johnson, Sub Pop's Bruce Pavitt.

**Drool-worthy Gear:** 1970 Buchla analog synthesizers, API multi-track consoles.  
[www.evergreen.edu](http://www.evergreen.edu)

### UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON'S DIGITAL ARTS AND EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA (DXARTS) Seattle, WA

"Our view is that art is no more self-expression than anything else people do," offers Richard Karpen, artist and Founding Director of the University of Washington's Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media. "Art is the process of discovery of new knowledge, the documentation of that knowledge, and most importantly, the experience of that knowledge. To accomplish this takes no less effort, expertise, and imagination than any of the sciences, and our students therefore learn to see themselves as challenged to make enduring contributions."

**Today's Guests:** Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, filmmaker Marie Jager

**Drool-worthy Gear:** A 12-channel spherical surround-sound listening space connected to a six-channel surround control room; a full CNC machine shop for building devices such as sensors and controllers for interactive live electronic music, video, and robotics.  
[www.washington.edu/dxarts](http://www.washington.edu/dxarts)

### UC SAN DIEGO'S INTERDISCIPLINARY COMPUTING IN THE ARTS MAJOR (ICAM) La Jolla, CA

The UCSD approach, according to co-founder Peter Otto: "We balance strong theoretical foundations with practical experience in an environment rich with musical activities of all kinds. Top-notch facilities support recording, performance, research, and development in all aspects of computer music and music technology. Our goal is to enable our students to continually retrain and update their knowledge base while integrating a high level of musical literacy with analytical skills and practical experience."

**Today's Guests:** Ravi Shankar, Steve Reich, Alvin Curran, Paul Drescher, Diamanda Galas, and videogame-music great George Sanger.

**Drool-worthy Gear:** Vintage Buchla, Arp, and Moog synthesizers; vintage and state-of-the-art mics and recording gear; 24-channel spatial audio lab; digital cinema auditorium with permanently installed 22.2 audio.  
[digitalarts.ucsd.edu](http://digitalarts.ucsd.edu)

Words Matt Harrison

Photo Blingmodd

# MEGASOID

SIXTOO AND A LONE WOLF  
BRING THEIR PARTY-IN-A-BOX  
TO A BLOCK NEAR YOU.

To date, Megasoid is still on the loose. Comprised of Sixtoo's Rob Squire and Wolf Parade's Hadji Bakara, Megasoid has been running amok in Montreal with a turbo-crunk collaboration that started off as a monthly night (which has included stops in Toronto and New York), but has quickly expanded into spontaneous block parties throughout the city (often broadcast, soundsystem-style, from a rundown minivan). Aside from some unwanted police attention, and banishment from one Toronto venue, the two-man posse has been blasting its live-remix party late into the night with much street-level acclaim.

"You know that if you're coming out to a Megasoid night, chances are you'll either get hit by a dude swinging another dude over his head, or 2,000 watts of feedback, or some really rock-solid digital-crunk shit," Squire says.

To be fair, most "producer" shows straight up suck—a sentiment Squire shares—but one might be forgiven for assuming the opposite after a Megasoid party, considering the gargantuan synths, miles of wire, and other archaic gear that he and Bakara haul around.

In fact, it was their mutual love of synths that brought the two together. "The first time I borrowed a synthesizer off of [Bakara], I blew it up," Squire says, laughing about the pair's bonding moment.

While Wolf Parade's frantic indie rock somewhat resembles the energy of a Megasoid show, Squire's intricately produced hip-hop records as Sixtoo are its very antithesis. His recent *Jackals and Vipers in Envy of Man* (Ninja Tune) is a slow-paced album of lumbering, slightly off-kilter beats and sinister atmospheres; like 2004's *Cheving on Glass and Other Miracle Cures*, it rummages through the detritus of hip-hop, combining samples and loops with microprogramming and other digital effects to create a record of subdued but elaborate majesty.

"Megasoid isn't super dance-y, but it's not Sixtoo stuff either," Squire offers. Instead, the side-project takes its cues from everywhere—from French techno to Southern bounce—and smashes them together. "It's gone everywhere from Mouse on Mars albums to literally destroyed records found in trash bins," he continues. Of course, the influences stretch beyond even those parameters, and into *Mighty Morphin' Power Ranger* territory, too. "I was throwing around futuristic-sounding names," says Squire, "and Hadji was like, 'There's no fucking way we are naming it anything but Megasoid.'"

A Megasoid full-length is expected on Ninja Tune in early 2008. Sixtoo's *Jackals and Vipers in Envy of Man* is out now. [www.myspace.com/megasoid](http://www.myspace.com/megasoid)



PHOTO: Rocky Wikimedia via Getty Images

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"Strange Forest,"  
from Murakami's  
travelling exhibit.



## POP LIFE

A new book celebrates Takashi Murakami's Technicolor dreamscapes.

To coincide with a series of comprehensive Takashi Murakami exhibitions—beginning in Los Angeles last month and traveling through Brooklyn, Frankfurt, and Bilbao—Paul Schimmel, the Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, compiled *Murakami* (Rizzoli/MOCA, \$65), a striking, oversized coffee-table tome that tells the visual story of the renowned Japanese pop artist. The book, which mirrors the exhibition's display of sculpture, painting, and "consumer objects," adds notes from Schimmel and his peers, and celebrates an artist who's found worldwide acclaim for his fusion of traditional Japanese painting with *otaku* culture and street-art elements. It also considers Murakami's keen business sense—he cites Bill Gates as an influence and built a company, Kaikai Kiki, to manufacture and market his designs—and his high-profile collaborations, most notably the ubiquitous Monogram Multicolore line of Louis Vuitton handbags. That famous pattern, a Technicolor explosion that revitalized the once-stiff French luxury brand, made Murakami a household name in the West and is the best example of his unique art-through-commerce approach, which has made him a creative *and* corporate entity. Mainly though, *Murakami* examines Murakami the artist, a direct descendant of Warhol and Haring, with their rare ability to seamlessly combine high and low art—introducing westerners (Murakami even designed Kanye West's *Graduation* album cover) to vivid, anime fantasies.

Joe Colly  
www.rizzoliusa.com

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## Magical Mystery Tour

Every August, we hightail it to the Magic, Pool, and Project clothing tradeshows in Las Vegas. This time around, bright colors, trippy patterns, and simple silhouettes dominated. Here's a sneak peek of what your favorite brands have in the works for Spring 2008. [magiconline.com](http://magiconline.com), [pooltradeshows.com](http://pooltradeshows.com), [projectshow.com](http://projectshow.com)

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6. **Zoo York Optical messenger bag**  
[www.zooyork.com](http://www.zooyork.com)

7. **Quiksilver Space Patrol watch**  
[www.quiksilver.com](http://www.quiksilver.com)

8. **Clae Russle Umber shoe**  
[www.clae.com](http://www.clae.com)

9. **Zoo York Deck by Zered Bassett Make Set Series**  
[www.zooyork.com](http://www.zooyork.com)

10. **PF Flyers Bob Cousy All American shoe**  
[www.pfflyers.com](http://www.pfflyers.com)

# DRAGONS OF ZYNTH

**BROOKLYN'S COSMIC ROCKERS WILL SOOTHE YOUR SOUL.**

Fraternal twin brothers Aku and Akwetey Orraca-Tetteh are used to working on their own personal wavelength. "When we play, we find these special moments where everything comes together," says Aku. "That's our strength and our foundation. We're pretty much in each other's heads."

It's some very coveted headspace, based on the gushing reactions the twins' band, Dragons of Zynth, has received this year. At a string of shows, including a lauded South by Southwest appearance, the outfit stunned onlookers, unleashing snarling, dub-driven experimental rock that was hypnotic yet driving, filled with textures not merely heard but felt. That they sport the occasional shock of neon-green hair or retro-futuristic shades straight out of the Bambaataa collection further caused critics to apply contorted descriptions to the Brooklyn band. Are they Afrotek? Synth stoner rock? Otherworldly kin to TV on the Radio?

"We make autophysiopsychic music," says Aku. "'Auto' being self and the soul, 'physio' being the physical manifestation of the psychic. It's this mind-body-soul truth. It's our own style, something for us."

The Dragons' story began when the twins, born to Ghanaian immigrants in the Bronx and raised in Cleveland, studied music together at Amherst College in Massachusetts under iconoclastic jazzman Yusef Lateef. A gentle soul who coined the phrase "autophysiopsychic," Lateef helped Aku pass a music-production class he was about to fail, and helped the duo look beyond genre boundaries to find their own sense of style.

"[Lateef]'s a jazz musician, but he doesn't call it jazz," Aku explains. "You write 'jazz' on a paper in his class and a C is automatically the highest grade you can get."

After graduating in 2002, the brothers moved to Brooklyn and began making music. Their first collaboration was "War Lover," a "heart-breaking manifesto" by Akwetey that eventually became the first Dragons of Zynth track. The band has subsequently endeared itself in avant-garde indie circles. A member of Beirut contributed a saxophone sample, which was looped backwards and grafted onto the explosive track "Get Off." The group has worked with Massive Attack on a handful of songs, and TV on the Radio's Dave Sitek—who became a cheerleader for the group after hearing early demos—contributed production work to the band's debut *Coronation Thieves*.

While often mentioned in the same breath TV on the Radio, Dragons of Zynth—and its loose, sometimes haunting transmissions—definitely stands on its own. "Once the album comes out, you'll see we're coming from a similar place [as TV on the Radio]," says Aku, "but it's very different."

**Dragons of Zynth's *Coronation Thieves* is out now on Gigantic Music. [www.myspace.com/dragonsofzynth](http://www.myspace.com/dragonsofzynth)**


Words Patrick Sisson  
Photo D. Yee




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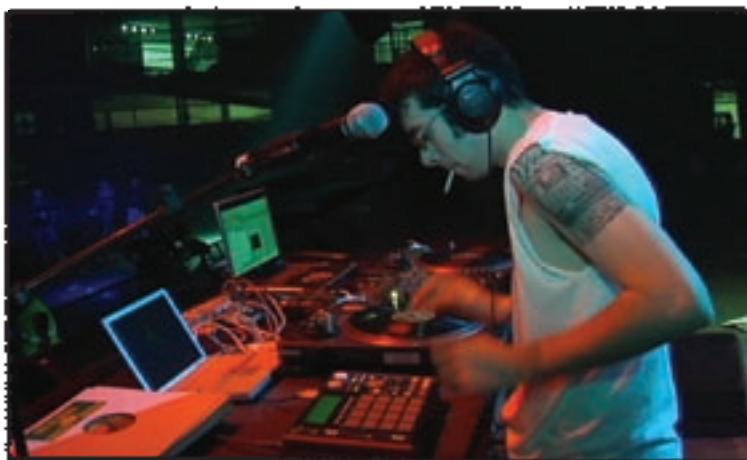
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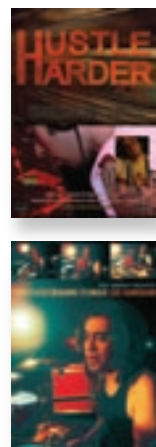
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Clockwise from top left: Disco D in the club; Jens Hannemann on the kit; Disco D in the studio.



## MANUAL LABOR

Two new DVDs sweat the techniques for making and selling beats.

### HUSTLE HARDER XXL

Thanks to its production tutorials and record-industry advice, the Disco D-centered DVD *Hustle Harder XXL* (Kagi Media; \$99) is worth its weight in gold. As a documentary, however, don't expect it to win too many awards. The first half of the DVD concerns itself with the right and wrong ways to "hustle" in a cutthroat music industry. As the late Disco D takes us through the pros and cons of self-management, the beauty of MySpace networking, and why kindness toward interns is always beneficial, it becomes evident that the real entertainment value in this documentary is Disco D himself. Known for his confident, intense personality, the perpetually stoned, fast-talking Disco D is full of hilarious sound bites and is a complete pleasure to watch. Moving into tech terrain, the DVD's second half includes detailed production lessons covering sampling and MPC beat-making, tracking, mixing, and mastering, all with helpful pop-up, user's eye-view screenshots of D's work flow. One just wishes that the same technical effort were put into editing the video's b-roll. *Ross Holland*  
www.kagimedia.com/hustleharder

### COMPLICATED DRUMMING TECHNIQUE

If your formative musical years included watching Vanilla Fudge drummer Carmine Appice's *Power Rock!* or Eric Johnson's *Total Electric Guitar*, you're plenty familiar with the cottage industry of embarrassingly lame music-instruction DVDs. In response, Fred Armisen—the *Saturday Night Live* actor and erstwhile drummer for Chicago indie rockers Trenchmouth—offers up *Complicated Drumming Technique: Jens Hannemann* (Drag City; \$14.98), a short-but-sweet parody of the genre. No, you're not going to glean any useable tips from the disc, but you'll get a glimpse into Armisen's hilarious psyche as he portrays Jens Hannemann (a typical long-haired, muscle-shirt-wearing Euro metal drummer) and instructor Victor Benedetto (who provides the DVD's stick-control "tips"). You'll also get 30 minutes of Hannemann's live drumming, recorded at the Tampa School of Music, where Armisen shows off not just his comedic genius (playing two hi-hats at once—only) but his actual musical skill as well. *Ken Taylor*  
www.dragcity.com

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**R.A.D. CASSETTE TAPE  
(AUD \$5)**

We have small music section—mainly local indie bands. R.A.D is a comical Brisbane skate-rock outfit and they were the perfect choice to play the opening night of our 2006 skate-art show. To quote their MySpace: "Brought together by a love of skate-rock and early '80s American hardcore, these dudes bring the fun. The songs are true to the source and littered with juvenile lyrics and pit-inducing breakdowns." [www.myspace.com/radskaterock](http://www.myspace.com/radskaterock), [skateonce.blogspot.com](http://skateonce.blogspot.com)



**ALAKAZAM T-SHIRT  
(AUD \$88)**

Will Sweeney—who has worked for Amos, Silas, and many others—has always had a place in our hearts. It's great to be carrying Alakazam, a London-based creative project he's doing with Susumu Makai. For the t-shirt component, they've enlisted some fantastic guest artists, including Outpost favorite James Jarvis. This t-shirt graphic sums up Alakazam perfectly. [www.alakazamlabel.com](http://www.alakazamlabel.com)

**PERKS & MINI UFO POM POM BAG  
(AUD \$268)**

Australia-based artist couple Misha "Perks" Hollenbach and Shauna "Mini" Toohey run the respected fashion label P.A.M., and create toys, artwork, and art books that make the world a better place. This amazing UFO Pom Pom Bag is from their latest collection, entitled "Weather Report." It sums up all things P.A.M.: twisted, joyful, and always on it before anyone else. [www.perksandmini.com](http://www.perksandmini.com)



**TREESON  
(AUD \$59)**

Created by Hong Kong illustrator Bubi Au Yeung, Treeson was born in the forest, is very kind, and has a branch growing out from its heart! It's been around for a little while, but its super cuteness makes it one of the favorite figures that we have in-store. This is a special box set that celebrates Treeson's second birthday. [www.wookieweb.com](http://www.wookieweb.com)



## GOOD STUFF

A few of Matt Brady from The Outpost's favorite things.

In the '80s, robustly named Brisbane suburb Fortitude Valley was renowned for its illegal gaming houses, gay clubs, brothels, and wild nightlife. Though it's slowly been cleaned up, it remains the spot for leftfield art and cutting-edge culture in Australia's third largest city. It's also where you'll find The Outpost, a small store stocking a precisely edited selection of zines and books, toys, clothing, and housewares from the country's best brands (Perks and Mini, Schwipe, Beci Orpin's Princess Tina) and special items from points beyond, like t-shirts from Seattle's Flying Coffin and Germany's The Lousy Livincompany. (Big-sister boutique, Blonde Venus, stocks high-end designers like Jens Laugesen and Hussein Chalayan.) "Australian design is mostly known for being a bit tongue-in-cheek, a bit larrikin," says Outpost main man Matt Brady, who loves the movie *CB4* almost as much as he loves fixing the store's air conditioner (well, sort of). He recommends you listen to the bands I Heart Hiroshima, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, and A Certain Ratio, and that you check out these Outpost best-sellers. *Tyra Bangs* [www.myspace.com/theoutpoststore](http://www.myspace.com/theoutpoststore)

I'd touch this if I were you...



Jammed with a ton of touch-worthy effects, the Korg mini-KP KAOSS Pad effect processor puts sound control at your fingertips. With an ultra-compact design and battery power, the mini-KP goes anywhere – even hook it up to your MP3 player to caress your favorite grooves. Easy, great-sounding, addictive. The mini-KP – meant to be touched.

actual size

Check it out at [www.myspace.com/miniKP](http://www.myspace.com/miniKP) and [www.korg.com/miniKP](http://www.korg.com/miniKP)

**KORG**



## SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world.

Now that the nu-rave phenomenon has faded away—along with your last glowstick—**Klaxons** have gotten back to what's really important: taking names and winning prestigious awards. Edging out other noteworthy British talent such as **New Young Pony Club**, **Bat for Lashes**, **Maps**, and **Amy Winehouse**, Klaxons won this year's Mercury Music Prize, the annual award given to the finest British or Irish album of the previous year. The prize: £20,000 and a cool little trophy thingy. • DJ, producer, and techno darling **Richie Hawtin** recently announced that his Minus label is going green. Sparked by the birth of a Richie Jr. and an observation of the environmental impact caused by his jet-setting lifestyle, Hawtin plans to make the company carbon-neutral, focusing primarily on artist travel and music-manufacturing methods. • While on the techno front, Berlin brings a bit of its infamous **Panoramabar/Berghain** nightclub to New York City with a new residency at Cielo. DJs **Ryan Elliott** and **Marcel Dettman** kicked off the event in September. Look for more madness at [www.cieloclub.com](http://www.cieloclub.com). • Rumor has it that the gods of shoegaze, **My Bloody Valentine**, are gearing up for the big comeback with talk of Coachella '08, a world tour, and two new releases—an anthology of

unreleased '90s recordings and a brand new LP. On top of that, MBV now has an "official" MySpace page to, you know, drum up fans or something. [www.myspace.com/mybloodyvalentine](http://www.myspace.com/mybloodyvalentine). • R&B-reggae singer **Sean Kingston** will play The Notorious B.I.G. in a P. Diddy-produced biopic on the late rapper's rise to stardom. Unsurprisingly, the film will be titled *Notorious*. • **Kanye West** freaked out at the MTV VMAs... again. • **Mos Def** is rallying for support in protest of Louisiana State Law Enforcement's punishment of six African-American students charged with attempted murder. The so-called "Jena Six" beat up a white student who was taunting them with racial slurs, and who had previously hung three nooses from a tree in front of their school. If convicted, the students could face sentences of up to 100 years in prison. For more info on how to get involved, email [info@mxgm.org](mailto:info@mxgm.org). • Avant-string kings **Kronos Quartet** recently covered the **Sigur Rós** track "Flugufrelsarinn" for a new single on Nonesuch. Check it out at [www.kronosquartet.org](http://www.kronosquartet.org). • New York City sneaker and street-gear boutique **Alife** recently opened a shop in Los Angeles. Maybe it's time to change their slogan from "Strictly New York Shit" to "Strictly Cities Where 11-Year-Olds Have Credit Cards and Would Kill



Their Mother For Those Dunks, Son." • German label group **!K7** has announced the acquisition and re-launch of UK label **Strut Records**. In the brief period between 1999 and 2003, Strut gained distinction for compilations and reissues primarily focused on the history of dance music, from Afrobeat to experimental disco. Next year, look for more unique collections and new studio material from dance legends, starting with the first new **Grandmaster Flash** album in 10 years. • Catch hot, exclusive mixes, podcasts, and videocasts from **?uestlove**, **Michael Mayer**, **Theo Parrish**, and more at Red Bull Music Academy's new online station, [www.rbmaradio.com](http://www.rbmaradio.com). • For

anyone that missed the **Daft Punk** "experience" last summer, the robots are set to release a 32-track live album this month, aptly titled *Alive 2007*. Features include a 50-page booklet, the song "Around the World," and hopefully a t-shirt that says "I blogged about the Daft Punk show and all I got was this lousy t-shirt." \ RIP CBGB-OMFUG founder **Hilly Kristal** and jazz keyboardist **Joe Zawinul**, both 75.

1. Klaxons
2. My Bloody Valentine
3. Daft Punk
4. Mos Def
5. Sean Kingston
6. Bat for Lashes



### 1. MATTHEW DEAR "DON AND SHERRI"

Can't stop listening to his new album.

### 2. SLY HATS "WINDY HARMONY"

This song makes me feel like I'm on a boat cruise through a sea of piranhas.

### 3. ARCHITECTURE IN HELSINKI

#### "LIKE IT OR NOT"

My favorite Australian band ever.

### 4. CARIBOU "ELI"

I like this one a lot.

### 5. MATIAS AGUAYO "NEW LIFE"

This guy is on Kompakt, but I don't know anything about him.

### 6. LIKE WHOA! "OH I LIKE"

Awesome Australian cut-up sampled electro-house.

### 7. M.I.A. "PAPER PLANES"

I can't stop listening to this song either.

### 8. SOKO "I'LL KILL HER"

This one gets played on the radio a lot here, and gets stuck in my head.

### 9. BUMBLEBEEZ "CLUBB CLUBB"

This song is crazy cool.

### 10. THE FIELD

#### "THE LITTLE HEART BEATS SO FAST"

This one is all about the build-up.

Muscles' *Guns Babes Lemonade* (Modular) is out now. [www.myspace.com/musclesmusic](http://www.myspace.com/musclesmusic)







TO THE MAX(IMAL)

THROWING MIDDLE FINGERS UP TO MINIMAL, BERLIN'S QUIRKY **MODESELEKTOR** KICKS IT INTO TEUTONIC RAVE OVERDRIVE.

WORDS BRANDON IVERS  
PHOTOS BIRGIT KAULFUSS



Gernot Bronsert and Sebastian Szary of Modeselektor are wearing their hearts on their sleeves—but not in the tender, emo sense. Instead, they’re rocking oversized cotton tees emblazoned with a huge slogan: “Minimal My Ass.” This phrase, created by graphic designer Paul Snowden (of “Wasted German Youth” fame), is practically custom tailored for them. It’s simple, loud, and it boldly talks about *ass*. It could have only come from Berlin. And it defends—with a tongue-in-cheek sense of humor—the importance of being maximal: of not toning it down, of keeping it raw and real.

“Berlin is more than the idea of minimal,” says Bronsert exasperatedly, over a shaky phone connection from the duo’s studio. “I’m not talking about just music; I mean, this entire minimal way of life. People think, ‘Let’s come to Berlin and get a \$200 apartment. Let’s get fancy clothes and party for three straight days.’ But there’s more to [Berlin] than that, and people don’t always see it.”

#### ROCKING IN RAVE CITY

Modeselektor is the *other* sound of Berlin. Over the last five years, as the cool pace and stripped-down pulse of Richie Hawtin, Luciano, and the Perlon label have defined the German capital to the techno-speaking world, Bronsert and Szary have been stomping in a different direction—reckless and rowdy and chopped and screwed. Constantly floating between zany and serious, hard and soft, Modeselektor’s short attention span rarely settles on any one thing.

Since their 2005 debut album *Hello Mom!*—with its cover of a partied-out-looking monkey face—the duo has been shoving electro, dancehall, grime, hip-hop, and techno into the same illegal space, collaborating with leftfield French rappers TTC, Basic Channel’s ghost-dub vocalist Paul St. Hilaire, and Satan (made evident by sweatbox jams like “Kill Bill Vol. 4”). On their latest record, *Happy Birthday!*, off-the-grid drums and kooky glitch humor pick up where both *Hello Mom!* and their last mix CD, *Boogybytes Vol. 3*, left off. “Hyper Hyper”—a cover of a song by Euro-cheese dance act Scooter—pits Otto Von Schirach against percolator

clicks and a gabba kick, flitting between grime and warehouse rave beats. “Black Block” is banging industrial, a *Knight Rider* bassline clipped by piledriver snares and a steady kick. In the end, the album’s wild mix of ideas isn’t a step away from the duo’s previous work for BPitch Control—it’s a refinement.

Given Modeselektor’s love of in-the-trenches bass and artillery effects, it’s no surprise they were initially influenced by Public Enemy. “One of the first [lyrics] that changed our point of view was Chuck D’s [verse from] ‘Don’t Believe the Hype,’” recalls Bronsert. “[Sebastian and] I didn’t have English at school, so we had no idea what it meant. We had to translate it, and [learning] the meaning of ‘don’t believe the hype’ was a big discovery. I guess [that line] is still our aim: to be real, to show something that’s true. We have an old-school mentality—just not in a musical way.”

#### OPEN BORDERS

The Modeselektor attitude—indeed, the attitude of many BPitch Control artists—is a byproduct of the duo coming of age in pre-unification East Berlin. When the Berlin Wall unofficially fell in 1989, Bronsert and Szary were 10 and 14, respectively. Natives of East Berlin, neither had set foot on the west side before then; their only exposure to non-sanctioned pop culture was glimpses through the wall and radio broadcasts from the other side.

“I remember Szary telling me about how he would tune into radio stations broadcasting out of West Berlin,” says NYC-based producer/DJ Matt Shadetek.

FRONT, GERNOT BRONSERT BACK, SEBASTIAN SZARY

“The stations had hip-hop DJs, so Szary would save up his money to get blank tapes, which were really expensive in the east, and tape the shows.”

“The west side [of Berlin] was influenced by the GIs and the British soldiers,” explains Bronsert. “They had a proper hip-hop scene with street art and breakdancing and stuff like this. But then, when the wall came down, acid house started happening in the east because there were so many empty warehouses there—tons of buildings with no roof. [It] made the east side the best grounds for subculture and art. Everything was open and new. It was like a gold rush, and we were kids in the middle of it.”

#### LIVE AND DIRECT

By 1993, Szary started throwing raves in those roofless buildings while cutting his teeth on production with a Roland TR-909 drum machine and a TB-303 synth. Gernot began DJing around the same time, hearing about Szary through the raves he was throwing. They finally met in 1995—a year later, Modeselektor was born.

“Szary and I did our first stuff at a youth center that had a production studio for hip-hop beats,” says Bronsert. “It was paid [for] by the government, and there was a half-pipe and a basketball court. It was an open

space, so these ghetto kids would come to us with really dirty lyrics and we’d make beats for them.”

“Those were funny times—there was a bar nearby, and we’d steal boxes of Red Bull from there,” says Szary. “We drank [that] stuff until our hands were freezing and our teeth were shaking.”

Modeselektor became further immersed in the Berlin electronic music scene, becoming particularly known for their 1999 party series, Labstyle, an open audio/visual collaboration with video collective Pfadfinderei (who still do Modeselektor’s graphic design and visuals). Their live-show reputation quickly spread; by 2002, they were playing BPitch Control’s showcase spot at the Sonar festival with Ellen Allien and Featz.

“Modeselektor’s popularity has a lot to do with the fact that their live shows are the best you can see in electronic music,” says BPitch labelmate Sascha Ring (a.k.a. Apparat). “They are just depressingly good if you have to play *after* them... but that’s because they’re stealing my loops,” he adds, half-jokingly.

Besides working with Modeselektor as Moderat, Apparat is the “tech support” for Modeselektor’s live show. “He made us a customized version of his Max/MSP software patch, explains Bronsert. It’s called “Jihad”—the

“Production is like painting—when you use good colors, the painting has a totally different quality.”

holy war. We use that with a JazzMutant Lemur, which is a really fancy touch-screen MIDI controller. It looks like *Star Trek*. We had to change the whole patch especially for this controller, and Apparat did it all in one night of work.”

#### OF SECRETS AND SYSTEMS

Though Modeselektor loves to goof off, the thought they put into production is completely serious. “There are producers that can’t even remember their own tracks,” says Bronsert. “But each one of our tracks is like a little baby—they’re all a piece of our fucking ass.”

“Production is like painting—when you use good colors, the painting has a totally different quality,” he continues. “It’s not just about what you paint. Picasso and Jackson Pollock and all these guys... Do you think they used cheap colors? I don’t think so. You need analog stuff to record the right-sounding elements.”

Modeselektor uses all different techniques to get their sound. They bounce tracks through outboard mixers and tape machines when they need to; they use software and hardware synthesizers depending on what the sound calls for.

“There’s no system to how we work; it’s always different. Maybe that’s why [Szary] and I still make tracks together,” says Bronsert.



“[During the making of] *Happy Birthday!* it was a hard time for Szary because his father died, and he was really fucked up for a while. He couldn’t make music and he was always in a bad mood. So I ended up composing most the tracks on the album, when it’s usually 50/50. But I give up quickly—I’m the nervous type while Szary is laid-back. So he is the one that finishes what I start.”

“There are no secrets—it’s just a lot of work. That’s the secret,” says Szary. “You have to spend a lot of time and nerves.”

#### THE ODD COUPLE

Modeselektor, the music, is so much a sum of the two dudes in it: Gernot Bronsert—spazzy as hell and full of nervous energy, all jokes and cheeky tangents; Sebastian Szary—serious, deliberate, his epiphanies delivered in careful measures, and always

ending with a mumble or grunt.

And somehow this seemingly odd couple is able to create boundary-pushing and ridiculously awesome rave shit—so far removed from musical elitism, so human, and so really, really unafraid to be crazy. “[Gernot] and Szary are like a comedy troupe that knows all each other’s jokes,” says Shadetek. “One time, [we were] coming back from Hamburg and they had tuned in some cheesy techno radio [station] and were having this mad rave in the car. They were taking turns flicking on and off the car light, so it was like a budget strobe. They do that whenever, wherever. There was another party in their kitchen where someone sat and flicked a clamp lamp on and off for hours. Instant rave.”

Modeselektor’s *Happy Birthday!* is out now on BPitch Control. [www.modeselektor.com](http://www.modeselektor.com)

## TOP GEAR

Gernot Bronsert says he has never read a manual, but he’s no studio idiot. Here are a few of his favorite pieces of equipment.



#### Korg MS10/20

My favorite synthesizer is the MS20, but I have a customized MS10 that I really like, too.



#### Roland Juno 106 synth

I like all of the Juno [synths], but this one is my favorite.



#### Moog MiniMoog

These aren’t expensive in Germany anymore—you can find them everywhere. When I bought mine a few years ago on the free market, it was only 700 euro. It was painted in silver and was really fucked up, so I really had to fix it up.



#### SugarBytes Unique soft synth

SugarBytes is from Berlin, and they’re great. They did a synthesizer called Unique, and I think it’s one of the best [soft synths] out there. Two oscillators and very simple, but it’s amazing.



#### Studio monitors (all sorts)

We have Mackie B24s, Genelec, and Adam speakers, and they’re all running. We also have a little switchbox so we can switch between each. Most of the money we spend is on speakers, but that’s my fault because sometimes I get crazy with finding the right sound.

# THE ART OF NOISE

AVANT-PUNKS ERASE THE LINES BETWEEN THE VISUAL, THE AUDITORY, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.

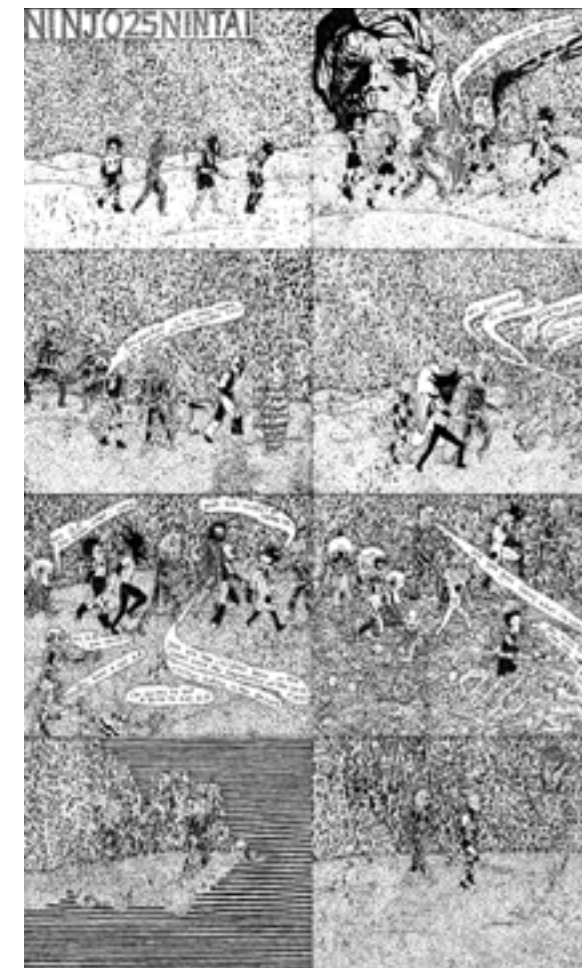


THE ART OF NOISE

Squall can just as easily be scrawl. Distortion can come through an amp or a video monitor. Cutting and splicing in the cosmic intersection is collage, whether it happens on tape, paper, or computer screen.

Video, music, drawing, graphic design, sampling—hell, even coding websites—it’s all art. That is the mantra being sung, spoken, and howled by a particular breed of avant-noise band, whose output bursts forth in giant waves of multi-format audio and images. Brian DeGraw and Lizzie Bougatsos of percussive neo-pagans Gang Gang Dance apply the same layers of goth grit and raw power to their art as they do to their trance-inducing live shows. Brian Chippendale’s fear of white space is echoed both in the chaotic drum assaults he creates for Lightning Bolt

and his sugar-rush comics. Lungfish’s iconic leader Daniel Higgs is increasingly interested in the cosmic intersection between uncomfortable blues and leftfield mysticism, and explores this junction through sight and sound. Black Dice’s psychedelic thrash dub finds a counterpart in their retina-melting collages and video projections, while the skronking free-jazz surprises of Skeletons and the Kings of All Cities’ *Lucas* are echoed in the audio/visual jumble sale that is the band’s website. From Boredoms to COUM Transmissions, this liminal space ain’t nothing new, but it sure is exciting. Join us as we explore the creative process with a gaggle of present-day art-punk’s most exciting noisemakers. *Vivian Host*



PREVIOUS SPREAD, BRIAN CHIPPENDALE COLLAGE, EXCLUSIVE FOR *XLR8R*

LEFT, TWO-PAGE EXCERPT FROM *MAGGOTS*

RIGHT, EXCERPT FROM *NINJA*

BELOW, BRIAN CHIPPENDALE

## PRIMAL SCREAM

LIGHTNING BOLT'S BRIAN CHIPPENDALE CREATES CHAOTIC, AND OFTEN COMIC, WORLDS OF MUSIC AND ART.

Brian Chippendale bestows bursts of messy details and an often-improvised technique on everything he touches... which is a lot of things. Known for the manic drumming and processed vocals he creates as half of artcore rockers Lightning Bolt, this primal beatman also collaborates with Forcefield's Matt Brinkman (as Mindflayer), releases solo CD-Rs as Black Pus, and even played drums on Björk's *Volta* album. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and a key member of the Fort Thunder collective, Chippendale's also an accomplished visual artist, whose detailed comic books and intricate, explosive Lightning Bolt album covers explore the same textured intensity as his music.

The graphic novel *Ninja*, released last November, is a perfect representation of Chippendale's frantic, cluttered style. Painstakingly assembled from drawings, silkscreens, and collages from the last

five years, along with samples of his childhood comics, the enormous 11" x 17" hardcover follows the adventures of a black ninja as he wages battles against villainous characters and ominous social issues over chaotic, heavily doodled backdrops.

Chippendale says he cares more for the characters than the storyline. "One of the major roots of my comics is character design," he explains. "It's become more of a social commentary, but it's still these silly characters walking around in a half-horrible/half-good world."

Chippendale's recent art projects stem from his lifelong love of comic books. In junior high, he began drawing comics with his friends before his RISD work took priority. "I quit drawing comics all through college," he explains. "I got into crappy, [collegiate] 'serious' art." But he couldn't stay away. Now, like a true nerd, he lines up nearly every week for the comic book shipments. "I read all that crap," he admits. "I was away for five Wednesdays on this last Lightning Bolt tour, so I'm going to go in this Wednesday and there's going to be a crapload of *X-Men*."

Aesthetically, the similarities between his work and mainstream comics are few, but his love of characters bridges the gap. "I highly doubt Marvel's going to call me up and say, 'We really need you on this idea,'" he says, "But if I want to draw stuff about real characters, I'll just do it."

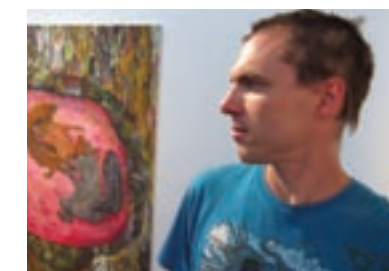
In *Ninja*, his love of pop culture shows—the book features appearances from Lego men, Cap'n Crunch, and *Spongebob Squarepants*. Such references are not ironic, says Chippendale. "I've been collecting *Spongebob* stuff without ever seeing an episode of the TV show. In my room, I'll look around and there's just these guys looking back at me. Having a bad day? Look at this *Spongebob* pillow—he's smiling! He's not having a bad day!"

Balancing prolific careers in music and art at the same time may seem daunting, but Chippendale says it's a necessity. "I feel like I'm losing touch with myself when I'm not drawing, like I'm drifting through life without digesting anything. It physically grounds me to play the drums each day, and it mentally grounds me to draw each day."

With the recent re-release of his *Maggots*

comic and work in the PictureBox art show at the Biennale in Athens, Greece—plus a new Lightning Bolt album and more CD-Rs from Black Pus in the works—this year is shaping up to be one of Chippendale's busiest. "It sounds amazing, but it's funny," he confesses. "I'm actually torn, because I kind of want to sit in my room and just draw comics." *Josiah Hughes*

Brian Chippendale's *Ninja* and *Maggots* are out now from PictureBox Inc. [www.laserbeast.com](http://www.laserbeast.com), [www.pictureboxinc.com](http://www.pictureboxinc.com)





## GANG MENTALITY

THE MARRED MIND BEHIND  
GANG GANG DANCE DELIVERS  
A LONG, STRANGE TRIP.

Tribalist punk envelope-pushers Gang Gang Dance make a lot more than just noise. Alpha-dancer and vibrant individualist Brian Degraw, in particular, flexes his visual muscles on their recent DVD *Retina Riddim*, a half-film, half-remix album that finds the GGD drummer flaying eyeballs and ears. Musically, Degraw and Co. deal in a stupifying, pulsating mish-mash of style and sonics; they are collage artists gluing together the cutting-room leftovers of 70 years of recorded music. It would follow, then, that the film is a pastiche of grand proportions—visceral images, stock photos, colors, and sounds colliding in a monstrous, overwhelming blur. The title itself suggests the film’s greatest attribute: relentless repetition that, over even the quickest spell, creates a sort of visual rhythm, an auditory ouroboros of unremitting sound devouring sight. *XLR8R* caught up with Degraw to talk about unending creativity, human department stores, and, of course, his stunning *Retina Riddim*. *Robbie Mackey*

### Why branch out from music and create visual art?

**Brian Degraw:** I don’t really see it that way. I don’t consider Gang Gang Dance to be specifically about music. Sure, the majority of our output is musical, but we’re all very interested in all aspects of production and creativity. In 10 years’ time we may be architects or sailors, but we’ll be building and sailing as Gang Gang Dance.

### So you don’t draw a distinction between any of the creative work you do?

That used to be a conflict in my life—I felt as if I had to choose one or the other and it really started to do my head in. I thought that if I did both then I wouldn’t get the best possible output of either thing. But then I began to realize the idea of the “unified vision,” which, in simple terms, is really just putting trust in your heart and your mind and letting them run free to do as they please. I like the idea of “human as department store.” Offer the world what you have to show, let them experience

your mind and share your product with them regardless of what form it may take, as long as it is heartfelt and honest.

### What philosophies and aesthetics would you say play a role in both your visual and sonic art?

My philosophy is just to breathe deep. Take deep breaths and then allow yourself some time to let your thoughts steep a bit in your heart, mind, and body. When the “tea” is ready then get out some pens, paper, drums, fire, whatever, and just try to release it. I find that if you think too much about an aesthetic then you get a result that might not be honest. That’s why I don’t go to art galleries anymore. I found that by looking at too much art my subconscious was retaining standards and ideas that were not my own and it was really just putting poison into my thought process rather than enhancing it.

Gang Gang Dance’s *Retina Riddim* is out now on The Social Registry.  
[www.ganggangdance.com](http://www.ganggangdance.com)



ABOVE: STILL FROM BRIAN DEGRAW’S FORTHCOMING VIDEO, *MONKEY DAMAGE*, EXCLUSIVE FOR *XLR8R*. LEFT, GANG GANG DANCE

## CRAZY, CREEPY, COOL

BLACK DICE'S ERIC COPELAND LISTS HIS FIVE MOST COMPELLING VISUAL ARTISTS.

Eric Copeland's *Hermaphrodite* and Black Dice's *Load Blown* are out now on Paw Tracks.  
[www.blackdice.net](http://www.blackdice.net), [www.paw-tracks.com](http://www.paw-tracks.com)



**Gunther von Hagens' *Body Worlds***  
Something about this exhibit made me feel bad, like watching beheading videos online. Maybe they could have been more respectful of the dead man's poses? Maybe it's still hard to see dead bodies sometimes? But then I pushed those feelings aside and I walked through the exhibition twice, really curious and amazed and laughing a little bit at the same things that seemed offensive before. I also appreciated that a lot of little kids were walking through with me, and they had funny reactions to it all.  
[www.bodyworlds.com](http://www.bodyworlds.com)

**Jeff Davis**  
He makes drawings that make me uncomfortable because they're dark and kind of perverted, but then they make me laugh for the same reason (and there's always some little creature smiling off in the corner). He also pours these colorful and gory wax-monster candles, treading the same line of humor and horror as his drawings.  
[www.ksartonline.com/jd](http://www.ksartonline.com/jd)



**Paul Laffoley**  
His was pretty much the only show I went to see last year, something of a retrospective of his 30 to 40 years of diagram paintings and maps of the cosmos. His bio said he had a metal chip in his head that communicated all his images in full. His newest work reminded me of shrines, though I remember it being about pretty notorious criminals—really obsessive and in a language I barely understood. Even his website amazes me.  
[www.laffoley.com](http://www.laffoley.com)

**Keith McCullough**  
A book of his drawings and comics just came out but his name isn't on it anywhere. It's pocket-sized and has a "Utility Sketchbook" cover. On the inside is a whittled-down collection of his little scenarios between personified dogs. I never had much of a comic-book phase, but I read this collection quite a bit while in bed and laughed. He's got a pretty dry sense of humor. I don't know how old these are—the book is new, but maybe these are old dogs?  
[www.pictureboxinc.com](http://www.pictureboxinc.com)

**Danny Perez**  
Danny is the projectionist for Black Dice, so maybe this is a little biased, but I never get to actually see him live because my eyes are usually in the light and the screen is behind me. I caught a set he did for another band, and besides responding to his pulsing and bleeding colors, I saw how much he plays with his tools like electronic instruments. He is much more than a projectionist, and that last show proved to me how far he's come with his craft.





STILLS FROM SKELETONS' FORTHCOMING VIDEO, *SICKNESS*, EXCLUSIVE FOR *XLR8R*

## A TANGLED WEB

THE LEADER OF *SKELETONS AND THE KINGS OF ALL CITIES* FINDS ARTISTIC FULFILLMENT IN FREAKED-OUT NET PROGRAMMING.

*Do as much as possible with as little as possible*—that's the efficient guiding principle behind *Lucas*, the latest record from Buffalo, NY oddball Matt Mehlan and the cast of characters he's assembled under the Skeletons and the Kings of All Cities umbrella. Initially, the album's big-stuff-small-package compositions—mostly about a boy, his magical hair, and a mythical journey—seem *too* dense. To be fair, they teem with patches of auxiliary percussion, space-station electronic bleeps, acrobatic Afrobeat guitars, woozy brass runs ripened by Sun Ra, and a sonic curiosity fit for a bizarre Arthur Russell. But cursory listens belie these songs' deceptively simple spirit; here, a few choice layers of strangeness lie flat on top of one another. Much like *Lucas*, the website Mehlan has created for the album is an overwhelming junkyard filled with simple but interesting pieces—it's an electronic store backlot, flickering with half-broken TV sets that hide live videos and various oddities. Here, Mehlan fills us on how getting loose with HTML is just another extension of the Skeletons aesthetic. *Robbie Mackey*

### How did you make the Skeletons.tv website?

**Matt Mehlan:** I've always liked to do stuff where you're getting some feedback immediately. It's kind of the same thing with music—I really like stuff that happens in real time, like improvisation. You can actually do a lot of amazing stuff with HTML and video programs, just improvising. And that's really exciting because it's just right in your face, not so esoteric.

### You can improvise with HTML?

Yeah, once you figure out the formulas

for these video-editing programs, you can just plop something in and it starts going, and you're just kind of morphing it. With Adobe and with Photoshop, once you get into the animation stuff in there, even though it's the most basic thing, you can sort of vibe on it and make something happen, and then from there decide where to take it next.

### Would you say the website relates to the music you create?

Yeah. They're both kind of raw in a certain way, which is I guess what I'm interested in right now. There's some sort of "extreme basic" thing.

### Amplified simplicity? I love how all the TVs make it look so simple and junky but within the junk there's all this hidden stuff.

That was a goal, in a certain way. It's also a goal to show that nothing that's junky is really that junky. It all has its necessary spot in the world.

### So do you draw a distinction between your visual and sonic work?

I do, in that I guess I kind of feel like a simpleton when I'm doing visual stuff. I have a much different relationship with it than I do with the music. I think, in a certain way, it feels younger to me. It feels like a new baby. It's like the first time I heard The Beatles. I have more of that excitement now with visual art than I do with music because, I mean, I guess I'm starting to run out of things to be excited about in music.

Skeletons and the King of All Cities' *Lucas* is out now on Ghostly International. [www.skeletons.tv](http://www.skeletons.tv)





EXCERPTS FROM *ATOMIC YGGDRASIL TAROT*

## SUPER SUPERNATURAL

PUNK ICON **DANIEL HIGGS** TAPS HIS MYSTICAL SIDE WITH THE *ATOMIC YGGDRASIL TAROT*.

Daniel Arcus Incus Ululat Higgs is one of the most transcendental forces in the subterranean netherworld. He's best known for fronting legendary hardcore acts Reptile House and Lungfish, and for being a world-renowned—but now, to the chagrin of many tat bros, retired—tattoo artist.

These days, Higgs has become the sage of punk evolution. After 11 full-lengths with Lungfish, the spiritual master has hit full-on mystic status with *Atomic Yggdrasil Tarot* (Thrill Jockey; hardcover, \$15.99), a book of poetry, mind-splitting watercolor paintings, and a companion CD of psychedelic-raga noise that places Higgs' roots closer to occult renaissance men like Ya Ho Wah 13 than Ian MacKaye.

Akin to his solo work with obscure experimental labels like Open Mouth, Northern Liberties, or the slightly more accessible Holy Mountain (OM, Six Organs of Admittance), *Atomic Yggdrasil Tarot* offers a meditative, lo-fi glimpse into the vintage roots of freeform psychedelia, while using

somewhat modern techniques, such as running acoustic guitar, banjo, Jew's harp, and field recordings through a pantheon of distortion.

The text of the book revolves around a series of circular epigrams using religious terms like "Christ," "Eden," "Bible," and "Death"; it's full of Higgs' trippy one-word associations and their accompanying mystic squiggles and serpentine shapes. Unlike most of the new-school psych crooners currently bloating venues with their stoner rock, Higgs' art radiates worldly experience. Underneath his disheveled grey beard lies a relentless journeyman, one whose visions are laid out in their most primal form, whether in words, images, or sound.

*Atomic Yggdrasil Tarot* may be the cosmos' answer to the obliteration of a once-blossoming punk scene—or perhaps it's just Higgs' second wind in an already triumphant career. *Fred Miketa*

[www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com)



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**Klaxons**  
go apocalyptic



## TECHNO GOES LIVE

BJØRN TORSKE LIVE  
AT THE OYA FESTIVAL

.....

If the last 10 years of electronic music performances have taught us anything, it's that watching people push buttons, tweak knobs, and move cursors isn't enough anymore.

With more and more artists looking to differentiate their live shows from the studio environment—and yearning to break free from the “email checking” cliché of using laptops on stage—we survey three heavy-hitters who are rethinking the parameters of techno live performance. Whether it's Ricardo Villalobos tweaking a room's frequencies for optimal punch, Bjørn Torske turning the stage into a mosh pit of costumed musicians, or Mathew Jonson redefining jazz through the lenses of house and techno, these artists won't be suffering from mouse elbow any time soon. *Ken Taylor*

.....



## EVERYBODY HERTZ

**RICARDO VILLALOBOS** PRESENTS A GLIMPSE INTO HIS MENTAL WAVELENGTH—  
AND THE FREQUENCIES THAT CONSUME HIM AND HIS 20,000 CLOSEST FRIENDS.

WORDS TONY WARE

PHOTOS MARIELLE VAN DOSEBURG

London's world-renowned Fabric nightclub is a juicy peach, a crisp apple... No, an onion: it has many layers, and a soundsystem of such clarity that it's been known to bring people to tears. Renovated catacombs that were once a Victorian meat cellar, Fabric still bleeds, only now it is the bass that soaks into the floors. When the fusillade of bodies and beats achieves maximum synergy, the impact is profound, flooding the senses with a holographic spectrum of stimuli. Amidst it all Ricardo Villalobos sees white.

Not the literal white of a snowstorm, or even of tensed flesh on a heaving British dancefloor (a familiar sight to the indefatigable DJ); rather, this is a rush of anthropomorphized sound, an aggregate of met potential. As the Chilean-born, Berlin-based producer releases *Fabric 36*—a 15-track mix of all-original productions intended as “present to,” and inspired by Room 1 of Fabric—he comes across as part conceptual artist and part cultural anthropologist in the blossom of this incandescent abstraction. He is a mystic *and* rationalist concerned with encapsulating, delivering, and evolving the full spectrum of modulation.

Press-shy Villalobos uses his increasingly lengthy compositions to distend and perpetuate rumpled hollows of such shifting detail that they defy the label of “minimal” even as journalists claim his tracks define the genre. Releasing productions for over 15 years (the last four of which have been scrutinized), Villalobos eyes less the snowblink of the spotlight and more the flare of fully realized sound.

“I’ve learned a lot about space in dub music, the music of Basic Channel and of other electronic musicians, that you can create this *room*, this possibility to interpret or feel music in a way,” says Villalobos by phone from his Kreuzberg apartment, itself a series of mostly alabaster spaces.

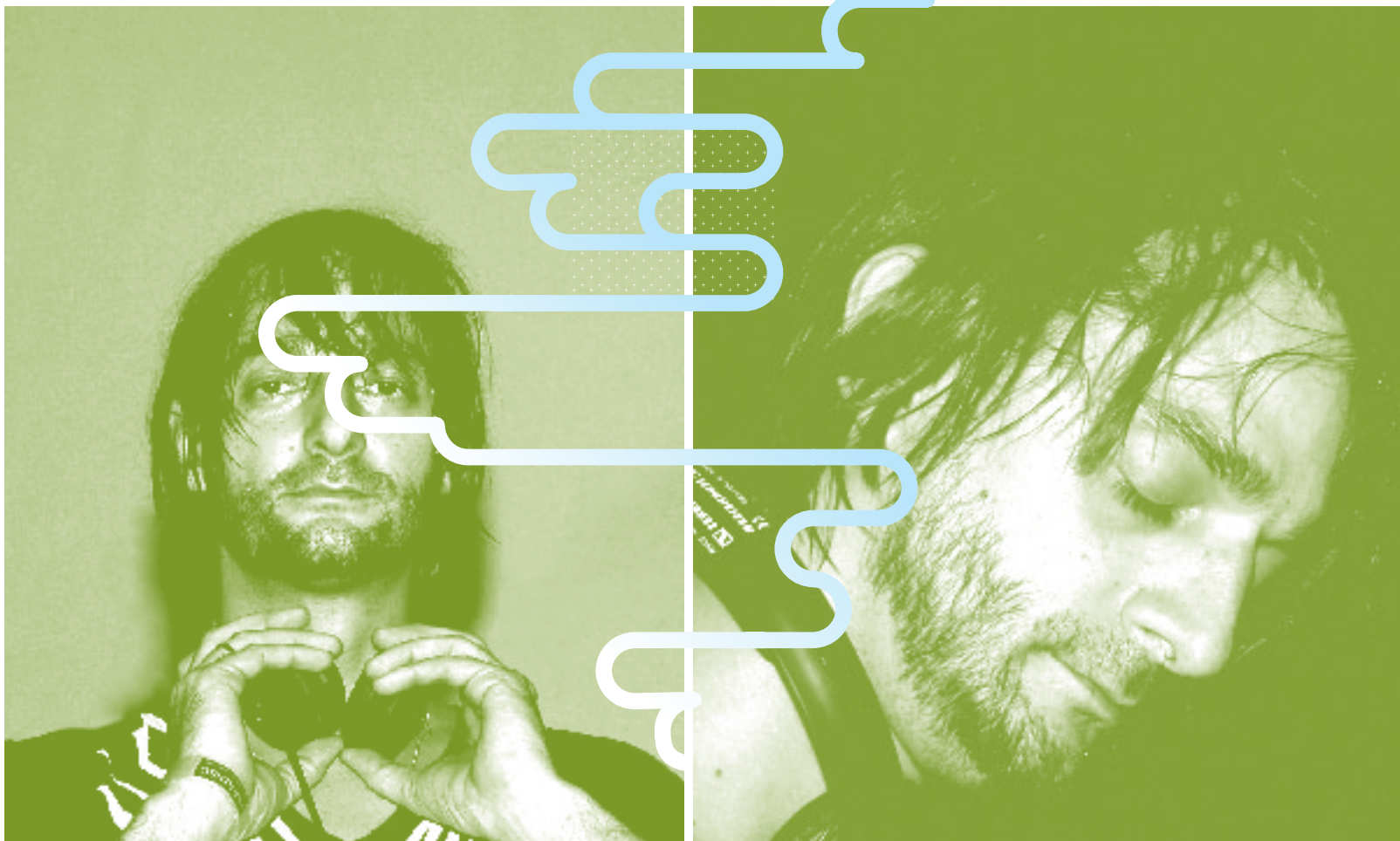
“It is not a thing exactly suggested like in pop music... but the *room* has to be there, and it has to be white, meaning it has all frequencies possible from 20 to

20,000 Hz—everything the human body can hear, and sometimes even more information we’re not hearing but still feeling.”

### DISCO 3000

According to Villalobos, Fabric can mirror that room necessary to reproduce a recording faithfully; the club’s sound technicians “run around finding the frequency of the night and deleting feedback, dedicating their time to the music and nothing else.” And Villalobos—who eschews, decries, and even vilifies the false representations of the internet and other digital forms—is enthusiastic to proclaim his loyalty to fidelity.

For all its pearly sonic architecture, however, Fabric is not *the* “club of the future,” a concept Villalobos has bandied about in several forums. For that Elysian construct, Villalobos envisions a white open space of pristine sound and political freedom, an outdoors arena where extreme attention to detail doesn’t require extreme volume. Operating under 100 dB during the afternoon hours, this nurturing ideal would be more like a social club, bringing together artists and intellectuals in the gaps between restrictions. Villalobos claims a friend of his working for Meyer Sound in South America is developing a ring of speakers, inside of which there is sound but outside of which opposite phase projections cancel out any sonic exhaust. Examining this concept of freedom with constrictions makes aspects of Villalobos come into sharper detail.



Even as he strives to dispel conventions, Villalobos has established certain hallmarks. His percussion is often tannic. While the length of his tracks can billow from an average of 12 to 14 minutes upwards to a quarter of an hour, his tempo is steadily ensconced about 128 bpm. Villalobos tracks don't rely on the explosive riffs of many dance music branches, but do showcase "feeling injections" in the form of wayward melodies, which sob, ping, and peal. At times, flange, gurned bass, and wizened percussion coalesce to add an air of acuteness to a composition that's unrepentantly groggy.

An avowed jazz fan, Villalobos confesses to spending a lot of time concerned with effects such as reverb and their honesty.

"Humans are experts at reverb," he explains. "We know if we're in a kitchen, an elevator, a big hall. Microphone recording lets in this space where the sound was recorded, but with electronic music it is an effect that is light years

behind. You can't betray the human ear, which is why dry recordings can be timeless and reverberant. It's impossible to bring into electronic music the space existing in acoustic recording, but we can make field recordings and mix electronic and acoustic music. This is what I try to do constantly."

#### MARATHON MAN

In the last few years, Villalobos the five-hour party DJ has become gradually more prone to inoculating expansive grooves with celebratory flushes, while Villalobos the producer has seemed to relish constraining cloisters of attenuated, blistered accompaniment to emphasized vocals. Percolating slowly since 2003's studio album *Alcachofa* (Playhouse), and truly coming to the fore on 2004's *Thé Au Harem D'Archimède* (Perlon) and 2005's equally clanking and cranking four-track (but also full-length) "EP" *Achso* (Cadenza),

Villalobos has established a tendency to collect piebald impulses within pieces that are not so much tracks as stacks of sound and nuance. Inspired by Villalobos' rumored party habits and his tracks' whorled tendencies, there was a brief lobbying effort to brand Villalobos' form of microhouse, "ketaminimal."

Several of Villalobos' recent high-watermarks—2006's 37-minute "Fizheuer Zieheuer" single, plus remixes of Beck's "Cellphone's Dead" and Shackleton's harrowing dubstep pangs on "Blood on Our Hands"—have been increasingly cagey, inverted swatches that command more than demand attention. Recent records are strung out and strung along, tinctures for layering more than standalone emulsions.

A "light house concept" with a strong emphasis on the "rhythm trip," *Fabric36* honors a number of these tropes while rebooting the tone to a less hyperbaric tick.

The disc is an evenly jacking assemblage—

featuring collaborations with Patrick Ense, Jorge Gonzales, Fumiya Tanaka, and more—inside which one finds reflections of Villalobos' personal philosophies and cultural background. Laying down a scoliosis-free kick, Villalobos kneads in and out Balearic intonations—light brushes of aqueous chords and atrophying trills. Midway, a bleary voice chatters obliquely over the broiled percussion and *taiko* drum blurts of "Andruic & Japan," a collaboration with Andrew Gillings, and the mood softens into something more diffuse.

"To discover other, strange instruments and mix them with our club music is to give the people... strange feelings... the thing that the person inventing the melody was feeling," reflects Villalobos. "This mixture, the challenge to find which moments are the right moments to put them on the dancefloor, this is the biggest challenge for me in the future."

#### MORE HUMAN

The way Villalobos refers to "our club music" as opposed to "my tracks" or "this song" is telling. As Villalobos fiddles about his studio—an amalgam of digital workstations, MIDI boxes, vintage mixers, and any acoustic object that produces a resounding thwack—he combs his frequencies for a sort of modern folk music. Music for the people—music of not only peaceful gatherings but of protest—is an integral part of Villalobos' art.

One of the many reasons Villalobos dislikes the internet (besides his aversion to his exclusive tracks being bootlegged, compressed, and distributed) is that he feels getting to know someone should not involve third-party conduits. Too consumed in production and DJing to maintain his public image, Villalobos somewhat believes there is a quintessential impression of him as merely a "heady, crazy guy... influenced by drugs, his South American roots, and lucky to grow up in Germany." Villalobos in no way comes across like an E-tard, though there are rumors that past parties may on occasion have crossed into one-toke-over-the-line territory. That thought aside, there are some aspects of the background check worth indulging, as they help *Fabric36* make sense.

#### THE DIGITAL DIASPORA

As the biography goes, Villalobos' family fled Chile in the wake of 1973's military coup (the aid of the U.S. in this event, as well as the Bush Administration's globally bullish, prohibitive policies, have kept Villalobos from appearing in America as a form of protest, though he says he would consider a formal invitation to a state-sanctioned cultural event). Since then,

with equal interests in early Mute Records' electronic perversions and *saudade*-infused Latin American songs of exile, Villalobos has forged a career out of exploring displacement.

"As I see, the folk music of Germany is viewed by a bad, 60-year-old consciousness of being German, so it is really hated and not represented," reflects Villalobos. "And in almost all the other countries in the world it is different. [The idea of] longing to have your home is fierce in the [music's] rhythm and melodies. So I take what is now a music in Germany loved by the young people and put in the influences coming from South American music."

Nowhere is this better felt than in the last 15 minutes of *Fabric36*, which culminates in the track "Primer Encuentro Latino-Americano." Previously making the rounds as an MP3, this track now finds its intended home as a summation of sorts. Rising out of a bed of willowy shimmer, the sinewy voices of '70s Chilean protest group Los Jaivas and Manduka emerge from eddies of cheers and the waxiest drums of the set.

By placing this rousing song last, the man who aims to pressurize time exits his opus—an exposition on repetition—with a lasting humanistic impression, one that reinforces his view of balancing the full frequencies of experience. Listen to the album loud, he says, because the tracks should be judged not in a vacuum, but rather in a swarm. Because, for all he stands out, Villalobos prefers not to stand alone.

*Fabric36: Ricardo Villalobos is out now on Fabric.*  
www.fabriclondon.com



## JAZZ HANDS

MATHEW JONSON'S **COBBLESTONE JAZZ** TRIO EXPLORES THE SPACE BETWEEN 4/4 AND THE DOWNBEAT.

WORDS ANDREW PARKS

When Tyger Dhula and Danuel Tate moved to Montreal at the tail end of the '90s, the pair was practically penniless, with no choice but to live in an old converted factory with other (literally) starving artists.

This was fine for the first four months—inspiring, even—as they toyed with techno and jazz motifs alongside longtime collaborator Colin de la Plante (a.k.a. The Mole). Together, they laid the foundations for what would become—with the addition of techno DJ/producer Mathew Jonson—the Modern Deep Left Quartet, and later, the groundbreaking trio Cobblestone Jazz.

Too bad an armed robbery had to go and ruin it all.

“Some guys pinned us down and pressed guns against our heads one night,” says Tate. “They took all of our equipment. We basically went back home [to Vancouver] with our tails between our legs and The Mole stayed because his roots are in Montreal.”

While their situation seemed ominous and overwhelming at the time, it forced Dhula, Tate, and longtime friend Jonson to focus even harder on the concept behind Cobblestone Jazz. Throughout the '90s, the three casually played around Vancouver under band names and pretenses that changed nightly. There was always one recurring theme, though: trying to add a blunted Blue Note vibe to the pulse of electronic dance music.

“In the beginning, we played whatever we wanted,” explains Jonson of the fledgling Cobblestone Jazz. “It could be a jazz ballad for 25 minutes or drum & bass. Sometimes not all of us were into it, but we still tried to have fun and be open to new ideas.”

### FEELING IT OUT

After live performances from the Montreux Jazz Festival to MUTEK and a series of single releases—notably their 2002 debut, the *5th Element* EP, and the distorted and dazed four-on-the-floor sucker punch of 2006's “Dump Truck” and “India In Me” (on their own Itiswhatitis and Wagon

Repair labels, respectively)—Cobblestone Jazz released their first full-length, *23 Seconds*, last month. The album is a striking display of the band's future-forward palette and approach, which applies Tate's traditional Rhodes rolls and improvisational jazz technique to Jonson's and Dhula's analog racks (synths, drum machines, samplers) and simple computer setups. This doesn't come out of nowhere: Jonson was a jazz drummer well before he produced twisted techno tracks for Perlun, Minus, and Kompakt; Tate's a jazz musician who has played keyboards for the past 15 years.

To emphasize the smoky lounge portion of the equation, the trio improvises their tracks to a live stereo mix while facing one another, a technique that leads to a lot of alternate takes. “We just feel it out as we go,” explains Jonson. “It's all about listening to what is happening inside the spaces of everyone else's parts. Contrasting the emotional content between players can give a song real personality and a live feel.”

Tate is a tad less philosophical about the group's chemistry. “We're all Geminis,” he adds, laughing, “So we've definitely called bullshit on one another more than a few times. The other two guys also have a lot of control obviously—they're mixing everything live, after all—so they can cut me off if they want to.”

### JAM HOT

For a trio used to untamed live shows and shambolic studio sessions, creating a full-length album was initially a daunting task. “We kind of refined our roles and said, ‘Let's do what we've always done—stick with what we have live,’” explains Tate.

In simple terms, these roles are split as follows: Tate mans the Rhodes and vocoder, Dhula takes care of percussion and programming, and Jonson adds in basslines and live drum loops. The electronic parts of the equation are produced via a streamlined collection of mostly analog gear (see sidebar)—instruments Tate describes as “very turn-it-on-and-go.”

“Sometimes we jam for half an hour and it sounds like shit until something finally clicks,” explains Jonson. “‘Change Your Apesuit’ is a good example, as it took a really long time to get the bass right.”

The push and pull of Cobblestone Jazz's recording process is exactly what makes *23 Seconds* (which features an insightful live set on a bonus disc) such an exhilarating listen—a wholly unique meeting point between jazz and techno that doesn't sound forced or fusion-y, with traces of micro-house and minimal lurking around every corner.

“People think techno and jazz should be separate, but it's pretty natural,” says Tate. “As long as there's technology around, people will try to find a balance between the two.”

“Some people say that our stuff is too jazzy, but as a jazz musician, it sounds normal to me to have live keys with techno beats,” adds Jonson. “In the end, it's not really about techno or jazz; it's about the music. If it has a groove, then that's what's important.”

**Cobblestone Jazz's *23 Seconds* is out now on !K7/Wagon Repair. [www.cobblestonejazz.com](http://www.cobblestonejazz.com)**

## LIVE IT UP

COBBLESTONE JAZZ'S ESSENTIAL GEAR.

The five mainstays below are the core of the trio's live set. “These instruments give us the ability to program in real time, allowing us to interact,” explains Mathew Jonson. “The analog tones of the Rhodes and the 101 really work well together, giving a nice foundation for the other elements.” *Andrew Parks*



### Fender Rhodes

Created during World War II by Harold Rhodes, this piano was originally meant to be played by bed-ridden soldiers. Everyone from Daft Punk to the Flaming Lips has adopted it in recent years.

### Roland SVC-350 Vocoder

Telecommunications companies first used vocoders to code and transmit speech in the 1930s. This particular model was used in the beginning of the *Dr. Who* theme.



### Elektron Machinedrum

“The world's number one beat box” creates, arranges, and distorts 16 tracks of percussion patterns. A customizable drum kit in a box, essentially.



### Roland SH-101 Synthesizer

Squarepusher, Aphex Twin, and The Prodigy have all been known to use this small analog synth from the early '80s. Sling it over your shoulder and you've got a “keytar.”



### DigiTech Vocalist Live Harmonizer

This rugged little box analyzes complex guitar patterns and instantly creates the right vocal harmonies, smoothing out that slightly off-key singing when playing live.





## ONE-MAN-BAND MAN

NORWAY'S **BJØRN TORSKE** LETS LOOSE WITH AN ECLECTIC ALBUM, AND AN EYE-OPENING LIVE SHOW TO MATCH.

WORDS JESSE SERWER  
PHOTOS BJORNAR HALAND

It's difficult to describe exactly what transpired during Bjørn Torske's set at Oslo's Oya Festival this past August but it surely can't be reduced to "Beardo disco" or any term one might apply to the 36-year-old Norseman's solitary studio recordings.

Joined on stage by a circus-like entourage of 13 musicians and vocalists, a white-gloved Torske led the way through a maze of four-on-the-floor organic house, slinky funk, and haunting dub while a costumed chorus (consisting of a flapper, a goth, a bad-ass biker chick, and a melodica-playing mouse-girl) topped select tracks with operatic imbrogios. When he wasn't operating one of several machines, Torske paced restlessly between the various performers, appearing more like an affable athletic coach than a conductor as he whispered directions into their ears and, often, engaged them in entire conversations while the rest of the band played on.

"When I'd ask someone to stop, they might say, 'No, let me continue another eight bars and see what happens,'" Torske explains, a month later, during a phone call from his studio in Bergen, Norway's second largest city. "While the songs were all rehearsed, we'd have discussions [during the show] to see what direction they'd take. It was all people I know, who have the same passion for doing stuff like that—we'd only had one rehearsal with the entire band. The day before, we all went to a studio in Oslo and had this barbecue out in the park with this really great chef that barbecued meat and vegetables."

The advent of the unit, dubbed the Bjørn Torske Big Band (a stripped-down version of which plays on "Dubet," the b-side to Torske's 2006 Smalltown Supersound single "Ny Lugg"), reflects Torske's desire to shed the digital box for warm organic vibes.

"More and more, my music has become about instrumentation and organic sounds, and not just machines," says Torske, a godfather of sorts in Norway's electronic music scene. His 15-year career has seen him hopscotch from house to techno to

darkwave disco. "I'll use pots and pans and shakers, whatever's lying around and makes an interesting sound."

Released in July to universally positive reviews, his third album, *Feil Knapp*, traverses icy space disco, minimalist techno, deep house, and category-defying electronic experimentation; but it's during sprawling, live-sounding dub tracks like "Spelunker" (in which high-pitched 8-bit videogame sounds are manipulated in a fashion that resembles Augustus Pablo's melodica) and the tribal-sounding opening dirge, "Hemmelig Orkester," where the record (whose title translates to "wrong button") truly finds its pocket.

"I've been buying a lot of experimental music from different time periods and Folkways records, like Inuit and African field recordings, stuff that's even more roots than what we recognize as roots music today," Torske says. "That's maybe the whole explanation [behind the album's eclectic sound]." Also factoring into the equation

was time; *Feil Knapp* is Torske's first album in over five years. While he has been active as a remixer (most notably reworking "Eple" by fellow Bergenites Röyksopp), he has kept a relatively low profile during the recent Norwegian disco explosion that he helped foreshadow with singles like 2000's "Disco Members" (Telle).

"I always want a certain sound for an album but even though it never comes out the way I thought it would, I still have to follow whatever comes," Torske explains. "So there's always a fear lurking, 'Am I going to be happy with this?' I'm also not very patient—I'll do tracks halfway, then come back later and see if it's still got the right [feel]. It's confusing but I try to feed off the confusion to do interesting combinations."

For his next full-length project, Torske hopes to bring his Big Band (the core of which includes key members from the Norwegian electronic scene including Per Martinsen of Mental Overdrive and Smalltown Supersound labelmate Jorgan "Sir

Dupermann" Traeen) into the studio for a semi-live recording.

"I want to do a proper multi-track recording, but with an audience," Torske says. "When you have people in front of you, you have to go all the way. I want to get a little tension in it, I want that risk."

In the meantime, Torske, who has never toured, is working on establishing a three-man live-performance unit so he can take his show out on the road.

"I'm bored of doing solo stuff and I don't feel that mixing tracks and putting on effects does justice to the word 'live,'" Torske says. "But having 17 people on stage is not exactly practical for getting a string of gigs."

**Bjørn Torske's *Feil Knapp* (Smalltown Supersound) is out now. For more on the Oya Festival, check [www.xlr8r.com/112extras](http://www.xlr8r.com/112extras). [www.myspace.com/bjorntorske](http://www.myspace.com/bjorntorske),**



# NEGATIVE SPACE

WORDS JOE COLLY  
PHOTO CARMEN VALINO

WITH *CONTROL*, RENOWNED MUSIC PHOTOGRAPHER  
**ANTON CORBIJN** BRINGS JOY DIVISION'S  
IAN CURTIS BACK TO LIFE.



(LEFT) ANTON CORBIJN (ABOVE) SCENES FROM *CONTROL*

It's clear when watching *Control*, Anton Corbijn's beautifully shot Ian Curtis biopic, that the film was made by a skilled photographer—each artfully designed grayscale frame is more striking than the one before it. The powerful movie, Corbijn's debut as a feature film director, also shows his intimate knowledge of the Joy Division story.

In fact, Corbijn owes some of his success to the band. In 1979, Joy Division's music affected him so deeply that he left his native Holland for London—without even a solid grasp of the English language—to be closer to their sound.

Since then, he's shot everyone from Tom Waits to Kurt Cobain and developed a prolific, decades-long relationship with Depeche Mode, shaping their iconic album artwork and imagery. After initially turning down *Control*, he decided his love for the band made him the right man for the job, and we asked him more about the experience.

**XLR8R: Are musicians generally difficult while being photographed?**

**Anton Corbijn:** Sometimes people are difficult, but generally there's a reason. I don't want to castigate some people as being difficult, because I don't think everyone should be open to being photographed all the time. I think they have every right to guard their privacy or the way they want to look on a personal level. It's very easy to label some people as difficult but that's quite unfair. I think we need to be more humble in our approach and be grateful that somebody wants to be photographed by us.

**I was curious if Kurt Cobain was okay with being photographed or if he was defensive.**

Kurt wanted to see what kind of person I was before we did photographs and I totally [understand] that.

Because, being photographed, you are getting naked in front of someone, in a way. I am drawn to people who take what they do seriously and I admire them more for it. Kurt was one of the nicest people I've ever worked with. He was a beautiful man—couldn't be nicer—but at the same time I had to get past a certain defense system of his.

**You've done so many historic record sleeves. Which do you think you'll be remembered for most?**

Unfortunately, albums tend to sort of go according to the sales figures; [that determines] how much people remember them. Personally, I'm not always keen on album covers with photographs. I like some of the album sleeves I've done but someone like Peter Saville [who designed the Joy Division sleeves], I totally admire and love.

The ones I'll probably be remembered for are the Depeche stuff and some of the U2 stuff, like *Joshua Tree*—in its proper version, not the crappy CD they sell these days—but the real vinyl one—and *Achtung Baby*. I also like the *Taxi* sleeve for Bryan Ferry.

**Depeche Mode's *Violator* is a personal favorite of mine.**

Thanks. I like *Exciter* as well because it's very simple and positive.

**Since you've been so instrumental in Depeche Mode's imagery as a band, is it expected that you'll handle the artwork if they release an album?**



CORBIJN DIRECTING SAM RILEY

At this stage, yes. I think a call would be made if that didn't happen and they would explain why they wouldn't ask me. It's just a great working relationship. I've just done the sleeve for Dave [Gahan]'s new solo album. It's a very beautiful thing because in music, relationships can be feeble. It's great that people are willing to look that far down the line and realize there's *something* to be gained from long-term relationships.

**You turned down *Control* initially. What changed your mind?**

I said no initially is because I thought that if I wanted to be taken at all seriously as a director, it would be very hard for me to start with a film that related to music. People might call whatever I do a "rock movie," and I wanted to aim a little higher than that. Then I started to realize how much Joy Division had meant to me in my younger

years, how influential they were to me. I thought about how you felt when you were younger buying an album or when you came to London with no money—that whole period started to come alive to me again.

**The film's much more a biography of Ian Curtis rather than the story of Joy Division...**

Yeah, it's not a film about Joy Division. It's a film about Ian Curtis, his story from age 16 to 23. A film on Joy Division would be quite different, I think. And it's not a music film. It's a film about a boy who chases his dreams to find where he ends up is not where he wants to be, and he becomes very disillusioned. There's a lot of good music in it, but it's actually a rather quiet film apart from the performances.

**How many people did you look at for the role of Ian and how did you know Sam Riley**

**was the right one?**

I looked at quite a few people, actually, because it's big shoes to fill, really. When I met Sam there was something about him that straightaway reminded me of the '70s. Not just a visual resemblance to Ian, just the way he behaved. You know: skinny, smoking, shivering in the cold—it was exactly how I remember meeting Joy Division. On top of that, he had the innocence of a non-actor that makes you believe far more in the character. It was a magical find, I can't stress that enough. Without Sam Riley, it would not be as good of a film, for sure.

*Control* (Momentum Pictures) is out now. [www.controlthemovie.com](http://www.controlthemovie.com)





## IN THE STUDIO: CARIBOU

FROM HIS APARTMENT IN LONDON, THE UK-BASED MATH DOCTOR DISCUSSES HIS FORMULA FOR MAJESTIC MINI-MASTERPIECES.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD PHOTO: DAN SNAITH

Despite having produced some of indie electronic-rock's grandest opuses, Dan "Caribou" Snaith has never worked in a professional studio. He makes all of his music alone in his tiny, apartment bedroom with little more than a computer, a cheap sampler, and a handful of instruments. But as evidenced by the songs "After Hours" and "Desiree" on his new LP, *Andorra*, it often seems like he has a 50-member orchestra under his spell. Since 2001's *Start Breaking My Heart* (recorded as Manitoba), Snaith has crafted a vibrant, Technicolor sound that embodies the raw wilderness of his upbringing in rural Ontario, Canada. *XL88R* rang up Dr. Snaith (he holds a Ph.D. in mathematics and is barely 28) at his current home in London to talk about tiny spaces and huge sounds.

### XL88R: YOU USED TO LOOP SAMPLES TO COMPOSE SONGS IN THE PAST. DID YOU USE THAT SAME TECHNIQUE ON *ANDORRA*?

Dan Snaith: This is the first record where I didn't record like that. It's the first time that I've actually written things before I recorded them. In the past, it was always just building upon loops and writing things as I go, and just making stuff up to put over top. But this time, it was much more about writing things and [having] the whole arrangement in my head before I started recording.

### MANY OF THE VOCALS ON *ANDORRA* RESEMBLE THOSE FOUND ON '60S POP ALBUMS. HOW DID YOU RECORD THEM?

I actually recorded every instrument that needed a microphone with this Russian microphone, an Oktava MK-012, which is just like a condenser microphone. It's really bright-sounding. I recorded all of the vocals with that and I then used a TL Audio channel strip as a pre-amp. As far as getting the vocal sounds that I wanted, it's a lot of layering. I'd record a part [numerous] times and layer them on top of one another. I tend to either like the dry sound that's panned hard left and right, or use a kind of reverb on some of the vocals.

### HOW WERE THE DRUMS RECORDED? THE BEATS BLEND WELL IN THE MIXES.

On "Melody Day," I recorded the drums in our rehearsal studio, but then they actually knocked down that studio a few weeks

after I did that. For all of the other tracks, it was usually just a floor tom, a snare, and a hi-hat or cymbal in my room, with the same overhead and a [Shure] SM58 [mic] under the floor tom. It was like a really, really stripped down kit... It's me playing this weird, Frankenstein kind of kit with two shitty mics on it. I'd then play it twice and layer it on top of one another.

### WHAT SOFTWARE DO YOU TYPICALLY USE?

I use Acid, which is the most basic audio-sequencing software on the market. I use a really old, expired version. It [enables me to] do some really simple things, like putting layers on top of one another, allowing me to loop bits or put in a few effects, but not anything like fancy reverbs or compressors. Any of these music programs that are out there do all the things that I want, so it's not really a question of that being a big part of my sound or anything.

### WHAT'S YOUR SECRET WEAPON IN YOUR STUDIO?

The Boss Dr. Sample SP-303. As well as it being a sampler, it also has a line-in, a pre-amp, and a whole ton of effects on it. I don't use any amps for guitar or bass or keyboards or any of that stuff; I just plug them straight into this thing and then I can put effects on it really easily. I tend to record effects and all of that kind of stuff on this thing rather than doing it later on. I put vocals, guitar—anything—through there... it's a versatile little thing. The only thing that I'm really looking for is for everything to be really easy and intuitive to use so that I don't spend all of my time fiddling with gear.

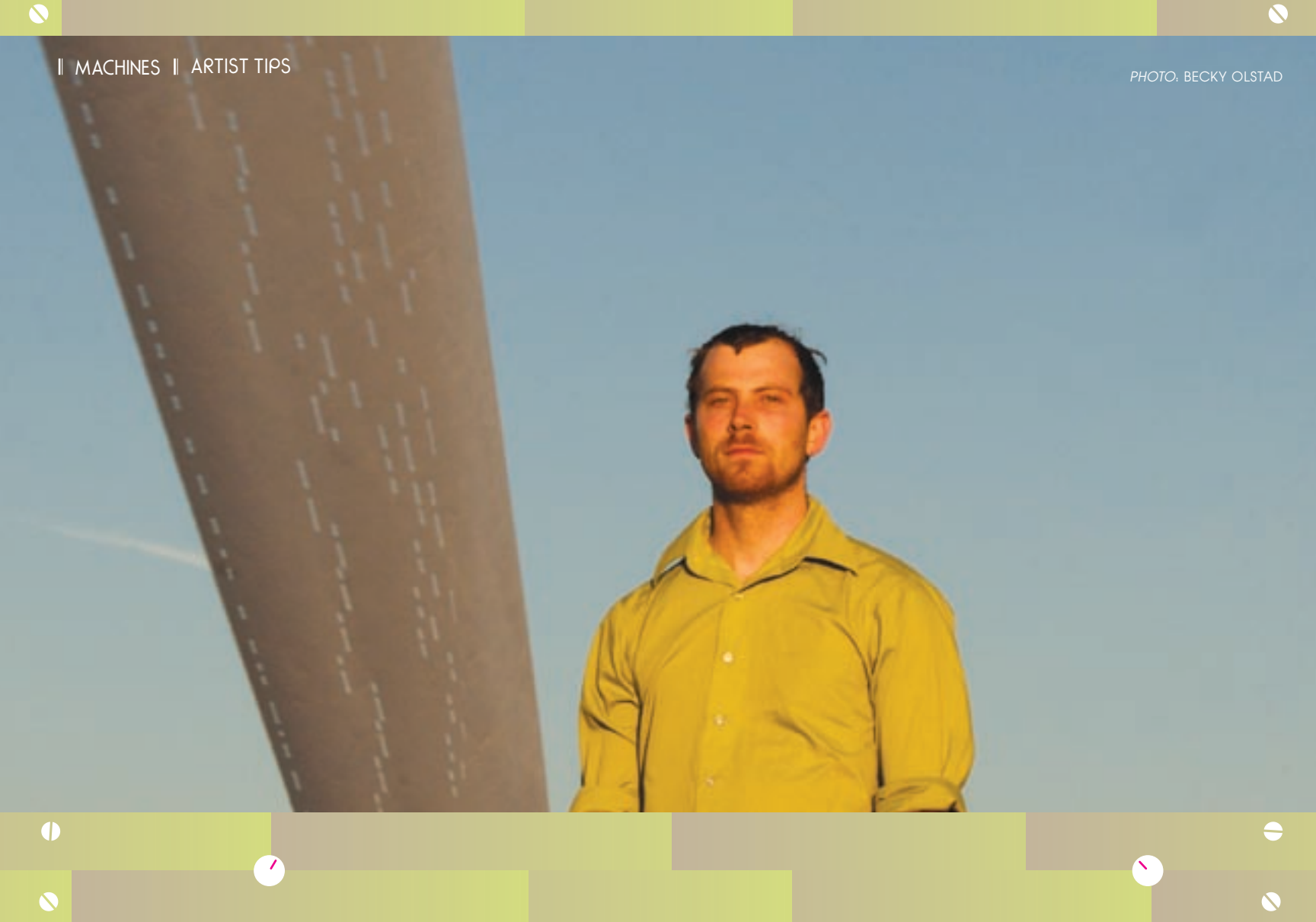
### GIVEN YOUR EDUCATION BACKGROUND, I'M CURIOUS IF YOU USE MATHEMATICAL THEORIES IN YOUR MUSIC.

Not at all. People think of mathematicians as being really methodical and being really careful, planned-out kind of people, but a lot of them that I met are the most scatterbrained, absent-minded-professor type of people. That's definitely the way I record. There's crap piled up everywhere, a microphone falls over in the middle of a take, and everything is a bit of a mess; everything is plugged into the wrong thing, the levels are all set wrong, and it's a constant messing around. As far as using formulas, it couldn't be further from the way I record.

Caribou's *Andorra* is out now on Merge. [www.caribou.fm](http://www.caribou.fm)



IN CARIBOU'S STUDIO, BOSS SP-303, MACKIE HR824



## ARTIST TIPS: ETHAN ROSE

Most of what Portland-based found-sound fanatic Ethan Rose records are things meant to be forgotten: antique player pianos, music boxes, the bells of a carillon, and soon, the wheezing of a dusty pipe organ. The melodies are near random, coming from punching a buckshot of holes in strips of paper (how music boxes are “programmed”), or breaking off nubs in player piano reels. Once fed through a rack of modern-day effects tools, these quietly scratching, hissing, singing ambient tapestries—many of which comprise the soundtrack to Gus Van Sant’s film *Paranoid Park* and this September’s *Spinning Pieces* (Locust)—are some of the most incomparably lovely works to come out of the Northwest in recent memory. Here’s how Rose puts it all together. *Michael Byrne*

### HAVE A PLAN

Everything I record is part of a larger artistic narrative. I started out with music boxes, then it made sense to record player pianos, and then I found the carillon. It was perfect for what

I’m doing; I traveled to Stanford and climbed a tower to record it. Next up is this enormous, all-but-abandoned pipe organ I found at an old theater in Portland. What I put a microphone to is as deliberate as putting a song—notating it—on paper.

### RECORD EVERYTHING

Every sound happens in an environment: it has a context and a history. Capturing this can be as important as choosing the sound itself. I barely, if ever, use noise-reduction equipment. The first player piano recordings were done in this antique shop, and I could hear Martha, the owner, shuffling around, probably trying to figure out why I was so fascinated with her old collection of music-tech detritus. In “The Dot and the Line” you can just barely hear police sirens from outside on Belmont Avenue.

### PERFECT YOUR MICROPHONE PLACEMENT

With the pianos, I used two microphones. One stayed right next to the paper, catching the sound of rubbing paper and this odd

rhythm that whomever built the thing could’ve never imagined being so important a century or whatever later. Obviously, the second mic sat further out in the room, catching the melody. I did the same thing when I recorded the carillon; put a mic right up against the growling machinery, which added a strange, very cool industrial shade to the final product.

### KNOW YOUR SOUND

I spent a lot of time researching the carillon. I wanted to know its past, how it worked—everything. I spent time at the library. I interviewed the caretaker. This approach should apply to anything. Know the sound, and you’ll know how it fits, not to mention the basic technicalities of capturing it as accurately as possible. Say you’re recording a bird—know why it’s singing, and you’ll know what to record next.

[www.myspace.com/ethanrose](http://www.myspace.com/ethanrose)



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THE FUTURE OF SOUND

**WHO NEEDS A REASON?  
REASON 4.0 PROPELLERHEAD  
PRODUCTION SOFTWARE**



Though the Reason addicts among us really don't need to be convinced, we've compiled a list of justifications for dropping the buck-twenty-nine price of entry for Propellerheads' latest upgrade to its beloved virtual music-making machine.

**Reason 1:** Version 4 adds the program's deepest instrument yet, a hot new polyphonic synthesizer called Thor. It's got six different oscillator types and four unique filters, and the analog-style step sequencer at the bottom can be used to create melodies, modulate your sound, generate percussion lines, or a half-dozen other possibilities. Also, Thor is a very good name for a synth, if you're keeping score at home.

**Reason 2:** There's the RPG-8, a monophonic arpeggiator that you can stick onto nearly any of the instruments in your rack. Think: real-time arp control with your MIDI keys.

**Reason 3:** There's the ReGroove Mixer for increased control over the shuffle of your drums. You know how MPC heads are always claiming that shuffle is what

gives their beats the uhhhh, nana nana? Now you've got that funk at your fingertips—with MPC presets built right in.

**Reason 4:** The sequencer has been refined to work more like the one in Ableton Live (a good thing), with sequencer data now organized into malleable "clips," and vector automation to control changes over time. There's also a new floating Tool window, providing easy access to your most-used editing functions. Like previous versions, this one's stable as hell, and the interface has been streamlined to be even more ridiculously fun to use.

There's still no ability to work with live audio, and a larger-sized rack would be much appreciated—looking at those tiny knobs is starting to make our eyes bleed. Still, it's a better, cleaner version of the niceness you love.

*Evan Shamoon*

MSRP: \$499, \$129 for upgrade  
[www.propellerheads.se](http://www.propellerheads.se)



**AKAI MPK49 MIDI CONTROLLER**

Take a 49-key semi-weighted MIDI controller, deck it to the gills with pots and sliders, add 12 real, honest-to-goodness MPC drum pads. Uh... awesome! The MPK49 is Akai's foray into the crowded keyboard-controller market, and **it looks like a winner**. With an impressive 72 assignable controls, you won't lack for MIDI assignments. It's got after-touch, a full MMC/MIDI transport, assignable expression pedal, footswitch, pitch-bend and mod-wheel inputs, room for 30 presets, tap-tempo and time-division buttons, note repeat, and a dedicated arpeggiator. The MPC pads come complete with the hallowed MPC Note Repeat function and Swing parameters. Had enough yet? You can even assign MPC Swing to both the arpeggiator and note repeat. Kids, if the MPK49 isn't on your Christmas list, it's probably time you wrote a new one. *Roger Thomasson*  
MSRP: \$599; [www.akai.com](http://www.akai.com)



**TOSHIBA GIGABEAT  
MP3 PLAYER**

As digital fanatics camp on the doorstep of cell-phone retailers waiting for the latest iPhone, the technicians behind Toshiba's music players have been developing an affordable alternative, one that **may rival the fancied fruit**. Housed in a sleek and elegant chassis, the Gigabeat holds 2GB worth of audio, and has the option of playing your MP3 collection, FM radio, or even recording live radio transmissions or live music without the use of your computer, if you're so inclined. Acting as a flash ROM drive to your Windows-running PC, this unit hooks up painlessly and allows users to drag and drop your MP3, WMA, or WAV files with the click of your cursor. Bite into huge value. *Praxis*  
MSRP: \$99; [www.toshiba.com](http://www.toshiba.com)



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**WAVES API COLLECTION PLUG-INS**

Waves hit gold a few years ago with their lusty, super-accurate SSL console emulations. Now they turn their attention to more peerless classics. The API collection (fully authorized by and developed in association with Automated Processes Incorporated) **features painstakingly accurate models of processors used on more gold records than you can shake a Grammy at.** First, the EQs: The 4-band API 550B features seven switchable filter frequencies spanning up to five octaves per band, with a Proportional Q that automatically widens and narrows the filter bandwidth. The 3-band API 550A EQ provides individually selectable high- and low-frequency ranges, as well as a band-pass filter that can be inserted independently. The 10-band API 560 offers extensive fine-tuning capabilities. The collection is rounded out with the API 2500 stereo compressor, which sports auto-makeup gain as well as “feed back” and “feed forward” compression. Essential, if you can afford them. *Roger Thomasson*  
 MSRP: TDM \$2000, Native \$1000; [www.waves.com](http://www.waves.com)



**NUMARK TTXUSB TURNTABLE**

Are you a vinyl DJ, loyal to records that inspired generations to lug turntables around before you? Or are you a digital DJ exploring the mixing possibilities of a laptop's hard drive? Maybe you don't know—and if you don't, Numark's got you covered with the TTXUSB, a computer-friendly upgrade to the TTX. The TTXUSB keeps all the DJ's essential tools in place (direct-drive motor, pitch controls, keylock, swappable tone arms), while adding in USB connectivity—so try out that DJ mix live, then digitize and clean out any stray vinyl pops later. Even if you're not a DJ, **the TTXUSB is a rock-solid table** for those looking to archive an unwieldy record collection to a pocket-friendly hard drive. *Rob Geary*  
 MSRP: \$399; [www.numark.com](http://www.numark.com)



**AUDIO-TECHNICA ATH-ANC7 QUIETPOINT HEADPHONES**

Noise-canceling headphones got a bum rap when they came to prominence a few years back—they were bulky, uncomfortable headsets that felt awful and sounded worse. Audio-Technica's ATH-ANC7 phones sit comfortably on your ears, pumping out accurate bass, excellent midrange, and very good high end, meaning practically everything sounds good. Somehow these cans sound even better in noise-canceling mode, as a quick flip of a switch kills practically all noise outside of lovingly rendered tunes, **a blessing in noisy cities and roaring airplanes.** The QuietPoints are by no means portable street headphones, but a fancy case and clever detachable cord (one straight plug, one angled) make up for any inconvenience. *Rob Geary*  
 MSRP: \$199; [www.audio-technica.com](http://www.audio-technica.com)



**ABLETON LIVE 6 LE PRODUCTION SOFTWARE**

Ableton Live finally introduces its little brother into the production world and broke music makers and electronic amateurs couldn't be more pumped. Offering most of the original application's features, including unlimited MIDI tracks, up to 64 audio tracks, both the Simpler and Impulse instruments, and the same intuitive interface, **Live 6 LE is a perfect transition to the software that's got everyone from Throbbing Gristle to El-P praising the Ableton name.** The only drawbacks are that Live LE only offers 12 available effects and two plug-in options per project (the full version has no restrictions), but that's still pretty generous for an LE version. More importantly, users can save their work, allowing for a smooth upgrade to the full version when it's go-time. LE also includes the same tutorial instructions that make this production phenomenon the most accessible music platform on the market. Producers, start your engines. *Fred Miketa*  
 MSRP: \$199; [www.ableton.com](http://www.ableton.com)



Also Available  
**Live 6 LE**  
 Entry Level Version



**Creative Explosion**

This is Live 6, the latest version of Ableton's award-winning software that composers, producers, DJs and musicians worldwide have taken to heart. Live now includes a versatile, comprehensive collection of sounds ready to play and inspire - from faithfully sampled acoustic and electric instruments to impressive electronic creations. Pre-configured controls let you play expressively without worrying about technical intricacies, or, if you prefer, you can dig deeper and explore endless possibilities for creating your own unique and personal sounds.

Check it out at [www.ableton.com](http://www.ableton.com).





**M-AUDIO STUDIOPHILE AV40 DESKTOP MONITORS**

Favored by electronic and acoustic musicians alike, the time-tested line of M-Audio studio monitors have become an engineer's standard. Featuring a value-oriented approach to a needed desktop accompaniment, these self-powered four-inch monitors quite literally deliver bang for the buck. Built from the same technology offered in the professional range of flat-frequency response monitors, these units contain four-inch polypropylene-coated woofers, three-quarter-inch ferrofluid-cooled silk-dome tweeters, and 20-watt-per-channel built-in amplifiers. Since all speakers emit electromagnetic waves that can wreak havoc on your computer monitor, these have been magnetically shielded to prevent any equipment interference. While speakers of this size typically don't offer the needed low-frequency response that today's dance music demands, M-Audio has included a bass-boost switch within the MDF wooden cabinets, **offering up enough desktop rattle to knock off your papers.** *Praxis*  
MSRP: \$199; www.m-audio.com



**CAKEWALK STUDIO INSTRUMENTS PLUG-IN**

Typically, when a plug-in comes with the phrase "No Musical Experience Required" on the packaging, it's probably not going to be a producer's wet dream. But Cakewalk's Studio Instruments stand up as **a resource for even the most plug-in-cluttered programmer.** Featuring an acoustic drum kit, electric piano, live bass, and strings (bass, cello, and violin), this standalone/DAW-friendly bundle can give any track a human touch (that is, if you don't have a cello kicking around at home). While the sounds aren't exactly the most authentic (any one of Logic's presets sound more raw), Cakewalk's mini collection can still be processed with any number of effects (among them built-in tremolo, chorus, and drive pedals) to give the otherwise plain instruments life. This package may not be hugely groundbreaking, but you can't beat it for the price. *Fred Miketa*  
MSRP: \$49.99; www.cakewalk.com



**UDG PRODUCER BAG**

Mobile electronic musicians will dig the new UDG Producer Bag. It's a one-stop portable storage solution, specially designed to carry a laptop, audio interface, keyboard controller (like the M-Audio Ozone or Oxygen 8), microphone, headphones, and, of course, the always trusty iPod. This heavy duty-padded nylon backpack sports two divided main pockets and three external ones, along with comfy, contoured shoulder straps and a built-in combination lock. The integrated CD sleeve feels a little antiquated in the age of MP3s, but we figure most producers will use it for burning mixes on the run. You never know what can happen when you're out and about—why not pick up a little bit of nylon-padded insurance? **Need more convincing? It even comes in camo** for the, um, urban jungle. *Roger Thomasson*  
MSRP \$229.99; www.ultimate-dj-gear.com



**ASK VIDEO LIVE 6 TUTORIAL DVD**

Getting started with advanced music production software can often create major frustration. But with ASK Video's Live 6 tutorial DVD, noobs can start mixing and remixing their favorite tracks in no time. With years of experience as a live performer (since Live v1.0), Morgan Pottruff (a.k.a. Morg) lets inquiring minds in on the basics of Ableton Live 6. Designed to aid computer illiterate and savvy minds alike, Morg takes you through the basics of installation and set-up to the final steps needed to output your finished mix. Teaching you the subtleties of the various features such as effects, recording, ReWiring, and VST instrument use, **the DVD offers you the tools to edit like the pros.** *Praxis*  
MSRP: \$55; www.askvideo.com



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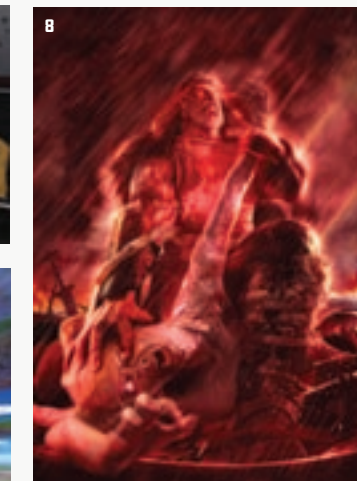
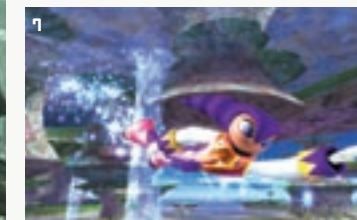
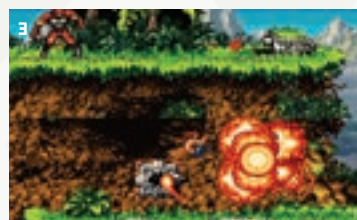


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"My favorite band of the year!"  
- Larry Gold (SOB's, NYC - celebrating 25 years!)

# loading...

XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.  
WORDS: RYAN RAYHILL



The 2007 holiday buying season hits full-steam this month and we, for one, love the smell of commerce! Let's have a look at the imminent gaming bonanza that is soon to wash over us in all its wallet-emaciating glory.

*Pokémon* has been a perennial hit for over a decade now but what happens when your monster-catching tastes have (somewhat) matured? *Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker* (Square Enix), that's what. With art by *Dragon Ball Z* creator Akira Toriyama, the stylish DS game aims to impress those ready to put Pikachu in the closet and move on to... Slime. Really.

But one game that will never be hidden from view in our house is *Contra* (yes, the one with the extra-life code that everyone memorized nearly 20 years ago). The impossibly cool (and difficult) alien-busting series makes a return on the DS this month with *Contra 4* (Konami). And, yes, it's awesome.

If 3D-alien slaughter is more your style, then allow us to present *Blacksite: Area 51* (Midway) for the Xbox 360 and PS3. The game features squad-based gameplay that allows you to command members of your team to perform various attacks on evil ETs in the Nevada desert, as well as online multiplayer battles.

Aliens aren't always just there to be shot at, however. In the gorgeous *Mass Effect* (Microsoft; Xbox 360),

a veritable space opera of *Star Wars*-ian proportions unfolds across the cosmos as every decision you make for your interplanetary crew affects the ultimate fate of the galaxy.

Also taking to the stars this month is everyone's favorite mustachioed stromboli, Mario, in *Super Mario Galaxy* (Nintendo; Wii). With Mario's usual bag of tricks mixed with zero gravity and the Wii's motion controls, fans are in for the most innovative (and dare we say best?) Mario game ever.

Also for the Wii is *Soul Caliber Legends* (Namco Bandai), a spin-off of the popular weapon-based fighting series that takes its outrageous characters and plunges them into a Wii-ified adventure-game setting. Thankfully, Ivy is still super-hot.

Looking to give *Guitar Hero* a serious run for its money this month is the soon-to-be unavoidable *Rock Band* (EA). Not only does this PS3 and Xbox 360 game allow for guitars and bass at the same time, but also drums and vocals, giving aspiring bands an opportunity to test out their stage chemistry with master tracks from the likes of Faith No More and Metallica before hitting the road.

Those looking for a solo career, look no further than *SingStar* (Sony; PS3). This competitive karaoke game features tons of tracks from hit makers like Ne-Yo and

Gwen Stefani, and allows those with EyeToy attachments to record their performance and upload it to the internets...because there aren't enough videos out there of people making buttholes of themselves.

If you were one of those kids who always predicted an impending war between squares and triangles, it's your lucky day as *Geometry Wars: Galaxies* (Sierra) hits both the Wii and DS. Inspired by classics like *Robotron* and *Tempest*, both versions of the game can speak to one other via WiFi, unlocking new features in each.

World War II never seems to stop when it comes to first-person shooters but thankfully, *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* (Activision) breaks its Nazi streak and reminds us that sniping people in the present is just as gratifying as it was 60 years ago. Instead of the Axis powers, this battle pits you against a Soviet nationalist and his Middle Eastern allies as they attempt to forcibly return Mother Russia to its former glory. Better dead than red!

However, if Middle Eastern turmoil and the distant past appeal to your sensibilities then *Assassin's Creed* (Ubisoft; Xbox 360/PS3) is your best bet. Taking on the role of a mysterious assassin during the Third Crusade of 1191, you must eliminate various historical figures as you navigate realistic representations of Jerusalem and

other holy cities—parkour-style—to suppress the ensuing chaos.

Most videogames based on movies invariably suck, but when the movie in question almost *is* a videogame to begin with *and* is based on one of the most kick-ass stories ever told, then the scales are tipped in our favor. Check out Angelina Jolie and Crispin Glover in all their Grendelicious glory at home as *Beowulf* (Ubisoft) hits this month for the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Due to popular demand, one of the Sega Saturn's hits from 1996, *Nights*, now has a sequel 11 years later on the Wii (remember when Sega and Nintendo used to seriously hate each other?) in the form of *Nights: Journey of Dreams* (Sega). Perhaps one of the trippiest games ever, you take the role of a flying, androgynous something-or-other who helps children in a dreamworld. Must... resist...Michael...Jackson...joke.

Speaking of ghouls, *Silent Hill: Origins* (Konami) for the PSP and *Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles* (Capcom) for the Wii both offer tense thrills in the vein of Hollywood

fright-fests with the latter using Nintendo's new Zapper attachment to dispose of beasties à la *Duck Hunt*. That asshole dog better not show his snickering face, however.

*Kane & Lynch: Dead Men* (Eidos) stars a cold-hearted mercenary (with a soft spot for his kid, of course) and a murderous schizophrenic who narrowly escape death row and set off together to retrieve a fortune in diamonds for a shadowy cabal. Like an interactive Michael Mann movie (for better or worse), *Dead Men* is one of the most unique action games to hit the next-gen systems this fall.

*Need For Speed: ProStreet*, the latest in EA's bazillion-selling driving series, is the first in many moons to not actually simulate illegal street racing but instead closed-circuit tracks, highlighting performance tuning over *Smokey and the Bandit*-style gameplay. As the name suggests, count on plenty of speed.

Finally, if you're like us, you need absolute privacy when surfing the internet. The reasons themselves aren't important—but what *is* important is that the *Headplay Personal Cinema System* provides an immersive and

surprisingly comfortable alternative to constantly shifting your monitor from prying eyes. Like having a lightweight, widescreen TV attached to your face, this hi-res headset not only works on PCs, it works on anything with an RCA or S-video out, including DVD players and game consoles. [www.headplay.com](http://www.headplay.com)

1. SOUL CALIBER LEGENDS
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5. ASSASSIN'S CREED
6. KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN
7. NIGHTS: JOURNEY OF DREAMS
8. BEOWULF



## POCKET ROCK IT

Bumpin' handheld apps take big-room beat-makers to task.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL ILLUSTRATION SHAUN KESSLER

Since Neanderthal man realized that the beat of his club against the skull of his enemies and potential mates not only sounded dope but also got him laid (*note: This may still work today but we don't advise it. Jail sucks.*), humans have constantly been on the lookout for new ways to move asses.

Mammoth-bone cudgels have since given way to expensive programs like ProTools and Logic, changing the face of music production and making the act of creating an entire hit record on a laptop commonplace. But up-and-coming musicians who can't afford pricey software or a home-studio setup have, in recent years, been able to find inspiration from an unsuspecting source: videogames.

Prominent artists from grime and dancehall such as Lady Sovereign, South Rakkas Crew, Skepta, and Plastician perfected their chops on affordable software like Fruity Loops for the PC and Music 2000 (a.k.a. Music Generator in the US), which became available during the tail end of the original PlayStation's lifecycle in 1999. Giving anyone with an average PC setup or PlayStation (of which there were over a hundred million of us) the opportunity to create and record beats without fancy equipment, this software offered guys like Dizzee Rascal (who recorded his first single "I Luv U" at home in under 30 minutes and went on to win the UK's coveted Mercury Prize in 2003) to hone their craft. Even now, many producers and MCs still swear by these programs as invaluable tools for laying down ideas despite updated programs for newer systems and portable versions that later became available.

Portability, and the idea of being able to carry around a virtual musical notepad, seems to be what many are looking towards, if new titles for Sony's PSP, Nintendo's DS, and even T-Mobile's SideKick are any indication.

*Traxxpad* (Eidos), developed for the PlayStation Portable with the help of hyphy production icon Traxxamillion, is already earning support from MCs like Lyrics Born as a virtual pocket studio featuring a full range of over 1000 sounds that can be sequenced, along with a drum machine and keyboard emulators to create patterns and samples in real time.

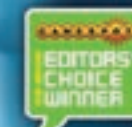
Similarly, New York-based Larva Labs ([www.larvalabs.com](http://www.larvalabs.com)) offers several T-Mobile SideKick applications for producers on the go, including MIDI synths, a full array of drum-kit sounds, and even virtual turntables allowing you to cut and mix MP3s from your phone, which can then be recorded and sent to your whole crew.

Even traditional analog-guitar sounds are seeing love in the form of *Jam Sessions* (Ubisoft) for the super-popular Nintendo DS. The title not only offers what equates to free guitar lessons but also gives would-be troubadours the chance to create, record, and play back chord-perfect hits while hitting the road.

With even more music-creation titles on the way, like Rockstar's upcoming *Beaterator* (being co-produced with Timbaland—but what isn't?) and the continued success of rhythm-based games like *Guitar Hero*, could a hit record that began as a Red Bull-and-Doritos-fueled *Halo* marathon be far behind?

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# SHOPGIRLS

PHOTOS: Andy Eisberg ([www.andyeisberg.com](http://www.andyeisberg.com))  
FASHION: Michelle Ten/Missfit Styles, Inc.  
MAKEUP: Wajana Vallecillo for WVNVC





**THE GOOD THE BAD & THE UGLY**

On Stephanie H: vintage sweater, jeans by Judi Rosen; Stephanie J: vintage T-shirt, jeans by Judi Rosen; Sarah: dress, leggings & heels by Judi Rosen

*(Previous Spread)*

**SWEET TATER**

Sarah & Christina: Dresses by Sweet Tater, vintage shoes

**VALLEY**

Julia: Earrings and rings by Manon Van Gerken, vintage dress from Valley, nails by Mika





**TG170**

Bowen: Dress by Lauren Moffatt, model's own shoes and leggings.

*(Previous Spread)*

**I HEART**

Jill: Hat by Sonia by Sonia Rykiel, dress by Tsumori Chisato, boots by Christian Louboutin

**TRAVESSIA**

Hiroko: Coat by Klein Corpse, top by Noma, pants by Burfitt, model's own shoes.

**THE GOOD THE BAD & THE UGLY**

On Stephanie H: vintage sweater, jeans by Judi Rosen; shoes by Converse  
Stephanie J: vintage T-shirt, and boots  
jeans by Judi Rosen; Sarah: dress, leggings & shoes by Judi Rosen

Shot on location in NYC at I Heart (262 Mott St.), Sweet Tater (280 Mulberry St.), TG170 (170 Ludlow St.), The Good, The Bad & The Ugly (85 Kenmare St.), Travessia (176 Stanton St.), and Valley (48 Orchard St.)

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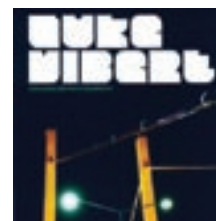
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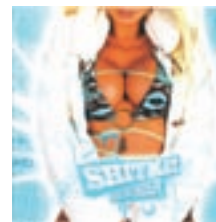
**Shitmat**

**MIKE PARADINAS' LONGSTANDING  
ABSTRACT-ELECTRONIC LABEL CHURNS OUT  
THREE NEW TAKES ON AS MANY STYLES.**

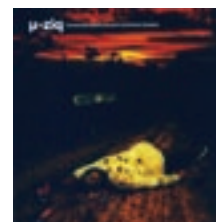
**LUKE VIBERT**  
CHICAGO, DETROIT, REDRUTH  
Planet Mu/UK/CD



**μ-ZIQ**  
DUNTISBOURNE ABBOTS SOULMATE  
DEVASTATION TECHNIQUE  
Planet Mu/UK/CD



**SHITMAT**  
GROOVERIDER  
Planet Mu/UK/CD



If the electronic underground were a zoo, Luke Vibert would surely be its brightest chameleon. Vibert certainly wasn't the first producer to work under a number of schizophrenic aliases, but he is one of the few to execute each of his many styles with success. Each of Vibert's monikers has amassed its own following over the years—to name a few: Wagon Christ (trip-hop/ambient), Plug (drum & bass), Kerrier District (disco-friendly tech-house), and his very first musical foray many years ago, The Hate Brothers (hip-hop).

*Chicago, Detroit, Redruth* is Vibert's second full-length album for longtime pal Mike Paradinas' Planet Mu label. (Vibert has frequently genre-skipped from Paradinas' label to other "tronic heavies such as Warp, Ninja Tune, and Mo' Wax.) *Chicago* offers a Vibert sampler: it's a satisfying taste of his robust range, and a confident display of his stylistic agility. Nods appear to each of Vibert's production styles: Wagon Christ gets a moody salute on "Rotting Flesh Bags," where eerie, ghostly ambient meets off-kilter trip-hop and handclaps; and Plug gets tipped on "Comfycozy," blooming with clear piano keys which gradually unravel into a murky stew of drum & bass snares.

The brightest points on *Chicago* are also the most vintage Vibert, hearkening back to numerous techno styles released under his full name. "Brain Rave" plunges headfirst into choppy breakbeat with rough analog textures, recalling classic Vibert productions on Aphex Twin's Rephlex label: "Radio Savalas" is a supple acid-synth exercise, showing Vibert's talent for steering simple melody into something sublime; and "Clilikik," this album's stand-out (although it previously appeared on a Planet Mu collection), fits huge, macho basslines and piercing tones into a slowed-down hip-hop shuffle that's nothing short of electrifying. Throughout these tracks, the cohesive thread is Vibert's nimble sense of rhythm and mood: What could sound scattered across genres instead manifests as something solid and whole.

Vibert has been age-old chums with Paradinas (a.k.a. μ-ziq), and something of the self-contained, cerebral approach from their earliest days as bedroom producers still lingers today. Paradinas, known for distorting electronic music to its very seams, indulges his longtime penchant for beat abstraction on his newest album. From *Duntisbourne Abbots' Soulmate Devastation Technique's* impossibly obtuse title to its overwhelming lack of song structure or melody, the record paints Jackson Pollock-like sonic splatters of moody experimentalism. Accessible moments happen only occasionally: "Strawberry Fields Hotel," one of the few tracks with any discernible form, sounds like an accidental detour—where ambient melody soars into a cinematic anthem, like a momentary beam into luminous dreamland.

Paradinas has also adopted a manic number of production monikers over the years (among them Kid Spatula, Diesel M, Tusken Raiders, and Jake Slazenger), mirroring his own genre-pushing interests by signing all styles to his formidable Planet Mu imprint. A counterpoint to Paradinas' Full Sunken Breaks identity, prankster DJ/producer Shitmat returns with *Grooverider* (cheekily named after the Prototype label chief and drum & bass king). *Grooverider* throws down a frisky breakcore workout steeped in '90s jungle, gabba, and ragga, bubbling with a sense of humor (check the refrain from Britney Spears' "Toxic" sneaking into "Zagreb"). Those familiar with Shitmat's prior work might be surprised by this old-school ode (i.e. less glitch, more jungle throwback); still, a legit return to the dance-floor is always welcome, and like his fellow Mu cohort Vibert, Shitmat knows that a little schizophrenia can be an invigorating thing. After all, as Vibert might say, a chameleon is known for changing its colors. *Janet Tzou*

**Album  
Reviews  
11.07**

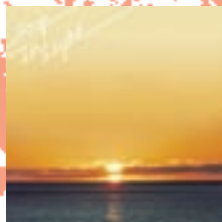


**ARP**

**IN LIGHT**

Smalltown Supersound/NOR/CD

Multi-instrumentalist Alexis Georgopolous reportedly left post-punk hypno-groove merchants Tussle under less than amicable circumstances after the group's *Telescope Mind*. However, if the fallout from that unfortunate split is his ARP project, maybe it's for the best. *In Light*, Georgopolous' radiant solo debut, is his righteous stab at Terry Riley-esque minimalism and the *kosmische musik* that made Germany the coolest place on earth in the '70s. That a young musician from San Francisco made this record in 2007 doesn't diminish its abundant, profound pleasures. Arp's no-overdub/analog-gear approach to electronic music and his solemn devotion to less-is-more composition ensure that *In Light* emits a sun-dappled warmth, evoking an eternal dawn of optimism, especially on "St Tropez" (with shades of Cluster's *Sowiesoso*) and "The Rising Sun." Elsewhere, a throbbing, hypnotic intensity prevails, as each wave of Arp's subtly tweaked analog-keyboard textures burrow into you like a deep-tissue massage. *Dave Segal*



**9TH WONDER**

**DREAM MERCHANT VOL. 2**

Sixhole/US/CD

Few hip-hop producers are as committed to soul-record sampling as 9th Wonder. He's even been criticized by some as being formulaic to a fault. But when it works, it works: Jay-Z, Mary J., and Destiny's Child have all hired him. 9th's strength is also his weakness, and *Dream Merchant, Vol. 2* is emblematic of that duality. When *Merchant* lags it's because a sample isn't interesting enough, and the resulting production ends up sounding like a simple, repetitive loop ("Shots" and "Baking Soda"). Like many producer albums, the tracks are only as good as their guest MCs. And here, only a few—like "Brooklyn in My Mind," featuring Mos Def, Jean Grae, and Diverse—stand out. *Stacey Dugan*

**ACEYALONE**

**LIGHTNING STRIKES**

Decon/US/CD

As legendary wordsmith and Freestyle Fellowship vet Aceyalone reminded us on his first solo effort, if he didn't have a mic check he wouldn't have a check at all. That thought recurs often while listening to the crunk-hall sound of *Lightning Strikes*, courtesy of L.A. producer Bionik, who wraps Acey's frenetic raps in digital wizardry that too often comes off as wankery. No offense to Bionik or dancehall's postmodern incarnation, but their overproduction overwhelms Acey's mind-blowing rhymes on the title track, "Genie," and on "Easy" (with fellow Good Life grad and Jurassic 5 baritone Chali 2Na). Yes, anything from Acey is worth your cash, but I can't wait until he goes retro with analog drums on reel-to-reel. *Scott Thill*

**ASSASSIN**

**GULLY SIT'N**

VP/US/CD

After burning up the Jamaican charts, Assassin has been dubbed the next man to champion dancehall on an international level, and he's got all the appropriate tools to make that 'appen: looks, hooks, and lyrics. With a fast-chat style somewhere between Buju Banton and Sean Paul, and a seemingly endless stream of niceness coming from his voice, he's definitely a top-notch sound bwoi. Assassin's style is straight yardie, with twisting cadences and a penchant for consciousness without the didacticism of dancehall's Bobo set. However, there's nothing on *Gully Sit'n* that absolutely screams "crossover"—good news for dancehall fans, but probably too much bashment for commercial radio. *Eric K. Arnold*

**BASTEROID**

**UPSETS DUCKS**

Areal/GER/CD

Rumor has it that Germany's Sebastian Riedl (a.k.a. Basteroid) ruffled a few feathers of Upper Austria's duck population during the production of his trace-fueled *Areal* debut, *Upsets Ducks*. Apparently, the beaked ones weren't down with flocking to the beat of Riedl's ground-shattering mash of appegiated grooves, broken kicks, and pulsating robotic rhythms. After years spent unleashing remixes and singles, Riedl's hunger for minimal techno, grimy electro-house, and trance saturates this album. From disco percussion and filth-flushed synths ("Attention: Upsets Ducks") to acid-splattered modulation ("Jacktales") and funk-out escapades ("Backstage Ass"), *Upsets Ducks* is an enterprising display of a sound collage lost within his own beat factory. *Chris Sabbath*

**BLACK DICE**

**LOAD BLOWN**

Paw Tracks/US/CD

It's becoming evident that you need at least a nodding acquaintance with madness to really appreciate Black Dice's music. Since 2002's *Beaches and Canyons*, these Brooklynites have been wreaking mental havoc by altering the very molecular structure of sound and mutating rhythm into grotesque—and riveting—configurations. *Load Blown* further refines the shattered-form, post-everything experiments of 2005's *Broken Ear Record*. The emphasis again is on building hypnotic rhythms via unconventional sound sources (industrial collapse, machine malfunction, drug-victim voices) and processes. *Nothing* is as it seems; disorientation reigns. But in their perverse way, Black Dice is making dance music—for H.P. Lovecraft characters. On *Load*, unprecedented noises team with menacing intensity, and a hideous new beauty blossoms. Album of the decade(nt). *Dave Segal*

**DIRT CREW**

**RAW**

Dirt Crew/GER/CD

I said goddamn! The double-timed 'tssk' of a hi-hat halving a stark electro beat (an effect frequently heard from Crosstown Rebels, a label for which Dirt Crew's Break 3000 and James Flavour have remixed) appears early and often on the Dirt Crew's full-length studio debut. Only having produced together since 2004, they've nailed a sound that's nostalgic for disco and feverishly sexy, particularly on "Big Bad City." These up-all-night bangers will satisfy patient Dirt Crew-remix fans and the sweaty basements full of people who don't know or care. It's retro-futurism done exactly right—and it's gonna give you shivers. *Rachel Shimp*

**EAST OF UNDERGROUND**

**EAST OF UNDERGROUND**

Wax Poetics-Lettuce/US/CD

The folks behind crate-digging journal *Wax Poetics* have uncovered a real gem for their inaugural album release. Found recently in a U.S. government office in Germany, *East of Underground* is the product of an Army squadron's battle of the bands in 1971; the two winning bands were granted access to a German studio on Uncle Sam's dime. In *EOU's* case, that meant laying down soulful covers of Curtis Mayfield, The O'Jays, and Santana. While adlibs and funky breakdowns elevate these versions beyond mere covers and give us some insight into the players' backgrounds, part of the album's appeal lies in its mystery, as the fate and whereabouts of the members remain unknown. *Jesse Serwer*



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**FIRE ENGINES**

**HUNGRY BEAT**

Acute/US/CD

There are many opinions on why early '80s Scotland produced so many of the best British post-punk bands, and they mostly center around one fact: no one gave a shit about Liverpool or Leeds, never mind the mad Scots, allowing bands like Edinburgh's no-wave geniuses Fire Engines to flourish unhindered. *Hungry Beat* offers their entire, tiny discography on one disc, and shows a band both more danceable and sonically radical than better-known contemporaries like Orange Juice. Songs like "Big Gold Dream" are practically a blueprint for the trebly rock of Art Brut and Franz Ferdinand, without the social lubrication: This is post-punk, as likely to throw you down a flight of stairs as snog you backstage. *Justin Hopper*

**HELIOCENTRICS**

**OUT THERE**

Stones Throw/US/CD

Heliocentrics are not back-to-basics hypocrites from the 21st century. Lead drummer Malcolm Catto and his seven comrades in funk and performance have the approval of everyone from DJ Shadow to Madlib, who employed their skills for *The Outsider* and Yesterday's New Quintet respectively. And for good reason: Their collaborative fusion has created an instrumental hybrid of wonders. Equal parts jazz, electronic, funk, and more, *Out There* is a collision of sonic signatures and smoking jams you'd want to hear on your way to Jupiter. From the cardiac-attack chill of "Joyride" to the skewed snares of "Sirius B" and onward into the aural freak-out of "Falling to Earth," Heliocentrics' debut disc is space-tracking defined. *Scott Thill*

**HOLY FUCK**

**LP**

Young Turks/US/CD

Toronto's Holy Fuck creates dance music that careens off the grid yet possesses a ragtag sense of discipline. They rock some primitive hardware, whose "flaws" outshine software's precision, summoning torrents of pinwheeling turbulence. Siphoning some exclamatory vigor off of !!! (but minus the sing-along choruses), Holy Fuck galvanizes with rambunctious grooves that'll make you shake your Can and cause you to wonder why more techno doesn't fizz with this kind of raw, triumphant energy. "The Pulse" and "Safari" max out Holy Fuck's monumental motorik mayhem; those and many other tracks here should be scoring highlight footage of the next Olympics. Like some ultimate soundtrack to multitasking and overachieving, *LP* makes Primal Scream's *XTRMNTX* sound anemic and renders energy drinks redundant. *Dave Segal*

**MADLIB**

**BEAT KONDUCTA VOL. 3-4: BEAT KONDUCTA IN INDIA**

Stones Throw/US/CD

India's sensory overload of color and cultures, when described by writers like Salman Rushdie, is living and dynamic, not just foreign and exotic. As the Beat Konducta, Madlib concocted a similarly organic combination on this new album, grafting together gritty slum beats, snippets of obscure dialogue, the regal sounds of Bollywood choirs, and mystical percussion. On "Indian Deli," the static-filled beats crackle like samosas dropped in hot oil, then an earthy flute sample drifts by like a spice-filled aroma. Sampling Indian music is nothing new, but it's rarely as unencumbered by clichés as it is here. While Madlib's brief and eclectic sketches of the subcontinent's music can be a mixed bag, they're never one-dimensional. *Patrick Sisson*

**CASS MCCOMBS**

**DROPPING THE WRIT**

Domino/US/CD

T.S. Eliot wrote, "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/Scuttling across the floors of silent seas," and Cass McCombs fans sometimes remark he should've become a literary figure rather than the singer-songwriter he is. McCombs has come a long way since 2002's lo-fi *Not the Way* EP, and even from his most recent *PREfection*. *Dropping the Writ* shows an increased mastery of melancholia and symbolic language, employed in the way Eliot used a religion-and-classics background to comment on the here-and-now. *Writ* is fleshed out musically with help from Deerhoof and Gang Gang Dance, and lyrically with McCombs' clearer voice and stronger storytelling. He's a massively underrated talent who should always dare disturb the universe. *Rachel Shimp*

**PREFUSE 73**

**PREPARATIONS**

Warp/UK/CD

Guillermo Scott Herren is the real deal—consistently on with a sound that's both signature and fresh time after time, Preparations is no exception. Neuromanced hip-hop grooves drawing on all flavors of samples and textures nail down cuts like "I Knew You Were Gonna Go" and "Prog Version Slowly Crushed" in an epic, synth-caressed form, while collaborations with the likes of the sister-fronted School of Seven Bells and Battles drummer John Stanier round out the package. Most of the album is Herren's own solo brainchild, unfettered by the spit of umpteen guest MCs, and it gives him a chance to flex his craft, embroidering exotic and crate-dug inspirations into the fabric of each episodic track... Shit's on fire. *Doug Morton*

**SHAWN LEE'S PING PONG ORCHESTRA**

**HITS THE HITS!**

Ubiquity/US/CD

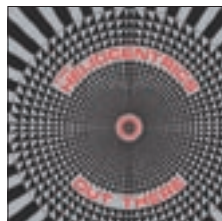
What happens when producers run outta rare grooves to sample? They make hits that *sound* like rare grooves. On *Hits the Hits!*, Shawn Lee's covers mutate the likes of OutKast and Kylie into a '60s and '70s "library" mélange of funk, soul, and casino-band tunes. What could've been a throwaway novelty is instead a ripe parody. Lee converts Amy Winehouse's inebriated soul into a sassy flute melody to lead his poppy cover of "Rehab." Missy Elliott's "Get Ur Freak On" jumps from the Middle East to Surf City, and Britney Spears' "Toxic" becomes Bollywood sitar-funk. A few covers are too faithful to the originals, but Lee reminds one that even the hippest, trendiest hits of today may be tomorrow's kitsch. *Cameron Macdonald*

**SOUL I.D.**

**SEX, LOVE & PHILOSOPHY**

ABB/US/CD

With members hailing from Burundi, the Congo, Rwanda, and Belgium, Soul I.D. takes all its collective identities to heart. The group's self-described "Afropean" soul music combines rich, layered vocal harmonies and hip-hop-inspired production with a distinct Euro sleekness reminiscent of Jazzanova, La Funk Mob, and 4Hero. The quartet nearly pulls off a Dwele-style R&B remake of Spandau Ballet's sappy ballad "True"; it's not their best side, though. But the dead *funky* male/female vocal interplay on "Believe" and the Donny Hathaway stylings of "Even Though" are exceptional. Soul I.D. forges a peaceful coexistence between neo-soul songcraft and Jeep-tough hip-hop beats, polishing the mix for an album with an ample share of shiny nuggets. *Tomas Palermo*



**SHAPE OF BROAD MINDS**

**CRAFT OF THE LOST ART**

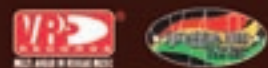
Lex/UK/CD

Revelatory releases from the alt-rap universe have been few and far between recently, making the arrival of Shape of Broad Minds' eye-opening debut, *Craft of the Lost Art*, all the more welcome. A multiregional "supergroup" of sorts led by Jneiro Jarel (in all likelihood, you've never heard of the other guys), SOBM flips a spaced-out jazzy aesthetic that at various points recalls Digable Planets, Antipop Consortium, and J Dilla. While MCs Rocque Wun, Panama Black, Jawaad, and Jarel (who also appears as his alias, Dr. Who Dat?) deliver solid verses all around, the true revelation is Jarel's inventive leftfield beatwork, which demonstrates a marked improvement upon previous (solo) releases like *Three Piece Puzzle* and Dr. Who Dat's *Beat Journey*. Here's hoping the sound put forth by these Broad Minds really is the shape of things to come, and not an exercise in a lost art. *Jesse Serwer*



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**SUNSET RUBDOWN**  
**RANDOM SPIRIT LOVER**

Jagjaguwar/US/CD

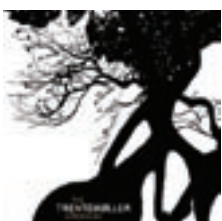
At what point does a side-hustle become a main gig? If it's after the b-team releases a record that outshines everything the first-string ever did, then Spencer Krug's marquee band isn't Wolf Parade any more. Meet the frontman for Sunset Rubdown, whose latest 50-minute epic takes knotty indie rock to the 16th century ("The Courtesan"), uses it to battle vampires ("The Mending of the Gown"), score a Krueger flick ("Colt Stands Up"), and show prog a thing or two about restraint (the rest). Indeed, *Random Spirit Lover* does all that and so much more, dwarfing Wolf Parade's scruffy Can-rock in the process, and easily cementing Sunset Rubdown as Krug's most shining success. *Robbie Mackey*



**SUPERMAYER**  
**SAVE THE WORLD**

Kompakt/GER/CD

There's no denying Michael Mayer's and Aksel Schaufler's pioneering genius, but things have taken a turn for the zestless on their Supermayer collaboration. In keeping with its comic-superhero get-up, *Save the World* is more novelty than substance. Tracks like "The Lonesome King" and "Us and Them" play like the soundtrack to some corny Eastern Bloc cartoon, and "The Art of Letting Go" follows suit on the level of a bad '80s sitcom, trading Kompakt's signature free-spirited chic for a deflated knock-off of the real McCoy. "Cocktails For Two" sports a pleasantly relaxed melancholy and "Two of Us" does admittedly rock with its monstrous, granulated bassline (despite the xylophone element), but the rest is pretty uninspired. *Doug Morton*



**SWELL SESSION**  
**SWELL COMMUNICATIONS**

Freerange/UK/CD

Since his EP *A Swell Session* dropped back in 2000, Andreas Saag has turned heads with his uncanny blend of funk, soul, and jazz mixed together into sugary delights. All the sweeter then that the long-awaited Swell Session album is all about top collaborations with music's finest. From U.K. broken-beat pioneer Domu on a more soulful bent ("A Heart to Cover For," featuring Elsa Helberg's amazing vocals) to "Masa's Theme," featuring Masa from Japanese jazz collective Sleepwalker, the timeless elegance of the work is a testament to Saag's wide-ranging versatility, and how others' musical influences have cast spells on him. It's good, it's funky, and it sure is swell. *Velanche*

**THE OCTOPUS PROJECT**  
**HELLO, AVALANCHE**

Peek-a-Boo/US/CD

Who knew post-rock indie pop would become such a crowded field? Austin trio Octopus Project has to work hard to put their own stamp on the subgenre, and they succeed convincingly on their third album, *Hello, Avalanche*, by adding dense, noisy guitar melodies and sweetly layered electronics. "Bees Been Struggling" is the album's standout, a handclap-led instrumental that builds up with colorful piano chords, and down with buzzing guitars like a rafter dodging boulders through rapids. OP is at its best when the synths and drum machines are subtle buttresses around their superb acoustic strings, glockenspiels, and brass, as on the energetic "Ghost Moves." The songs are better than ever, and it's exciting to hear the band hitting its stride. *Tomas Palermo*

**TRENTMØLLER**  
**THE TRENTMØLLER CHRONICLES**

Audiomatique/GER/CD

One doesn't really expect a producer with a public output of fewer than five years to be at a "chronicles" stage in his career, but then again, not many producers/remixers are as in demand as Trentemøller. This stunning double-CD sweeps together 20-plus original tracks and remixes, most of which were released on small compilations or singles. They highlight everything everyone loved about Trentemøller's full-length, *The Last Resort*: the play of icy against warm; the squelch of electro against techno kicks; and the staggeringly high production value that somehow never feels overdone. Whether he's presenting his original tracks or acting as your guide to artists that he's remixed (Röyksopp, The Knife), Trentemøller is always a dazzling showman. *Matt Earp*

**UNDERWORLD**  
**OBIVION WITH BELLS**

PIAS/UK/CD

Karl Hyde and Rick Smith's first full-length as Underworld since 2003's *A Hundred Days Off* is the best piece of work they've made since Darren Emerson left the band. And I dare to say, it's as good as *Dubnobasswithmyheadman*. If nothing else it shows a concept coming gloriously full-circle—musically, visually, and emotionally. Hyde whispers, "Keep it simple," but stocks the album with "Bruce Lee" and "Cowgirl" sound-alikes, twinkling leftfield techno, and even ambient. And what's great on it's own, like first single "Crocodile," is stunning in this package. Yeah, we're still getting an earful about postmodern societal inertia, but as something to jam to when you're staring out of that office window, it doesn't get much better than this. *Rachel Shimp*

**ZIMBABWE LEGIT**  
**HOUSE OF STONE**

pH Music/ZIM/CD

If you've been searching milkcrates for signs of Zimbabwe Legit ever since the Afro-hip duo was remixed by DJ Shadow, look no further. Akim Funk Buddha and Dumi Right are back, with a guestlist that works well with *House of Stone*'s true-school vibe: YZ, Vast Aire, Chubb Rock, Prince Po, Asheru, Skillz, Mike G, and others all take part. Yet since ZL first appeared, African hip-hop has become a phenomenon in and of itself. So it's a bit disappointing that the group's native cultural influences have been toned down; only one track, "All Over the Map," connects the duo with their motherland MC peers. Still, *House of Stone* should hit with tracksuiters and fat-lace heads. *Eric K. Arnold*

Check out thousands more reviews on [XLR8R.com](http://XLR8R.com), including new releases from: Ams Uno, DJ Rekha, Efterklang, Enon, Felix da Housecat, G&D, Heliocentrics, Mestizo, M.I.A., OCDJ, Prefuse 73, Roam the Hello Clouds, Shape of Broad Minds, Shocking Pinks, Two Lone Swordsmen, and Robert Wyatt



Enon

**ENON**  
**GRASS GEYSERS...CARBON CLOUDS**

Touch and Go/US/CD  
Enon's fifth effort in eight years, and their most Brainiac (frontman John Schmersal's first band) record since their *Believe!* debut, is everything we've been waiting for from these sometimes brilliant, sometimes frustrating indie-pop pervos. Gone is the trip-hop/new-wave schizophrenia that held Enon's last outing, 2003's just plain ridiculous *Hocus Pocus*, back. From the opening seconds of "Mirror on You" s' junkyard-tech vocal fuckery and growling bass, it's clear that, after a decade, Brainiac's mourning period is over. Guitars shriek, percussion clatters, electronics whip, and hiss. "Dr. Freeze" courses with barely-in-control bee-swarm synth and spit flying—Schmersal's barely-in-control vocal grimaces, which two tracks later, on "Peace of Mind," he fully unleashes and lets his falsetto rip. Yet below it all still rolls the pop sense—the clean lines, the structures—that ensures Enon will never be a tribute band, but one that knows, and honors its roots. *Michael Byrne*



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With his highly anticipated Last Gang/Turbo debut, Boys Noize delivers fourteen banging new Electro/Techno/Funk tracks that own the dancefloor.

LAST GANG / TURBO RECORDINGS



**SUNSET RUBDOWN**  
**Random Spirit Lover**  
FREE silk-screened poster with order! (while supplies last)  
Their third full-length features 12 songs that bleed in and out of each other, mixing portents with theatrics, confusions with conversions.

JAGJAGUWAR



**CALVIN HARRIS**  
**I Created Disco**  
Sure you did, Calvin! No one really cares about facts though when you make an album THIS DAMN GOOD! The song 'Merrymaking' in particular has made 2007 a whole lot better.

ALMOST GOLD



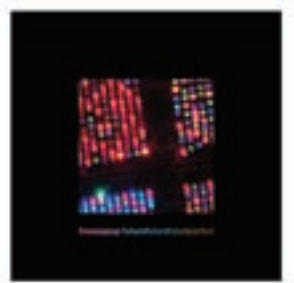
**SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO**  
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Justice are "at the forefront of a new school of electronic music" says The New York Times. † features the international hit single "D.A.N.C.E." US tour in October.

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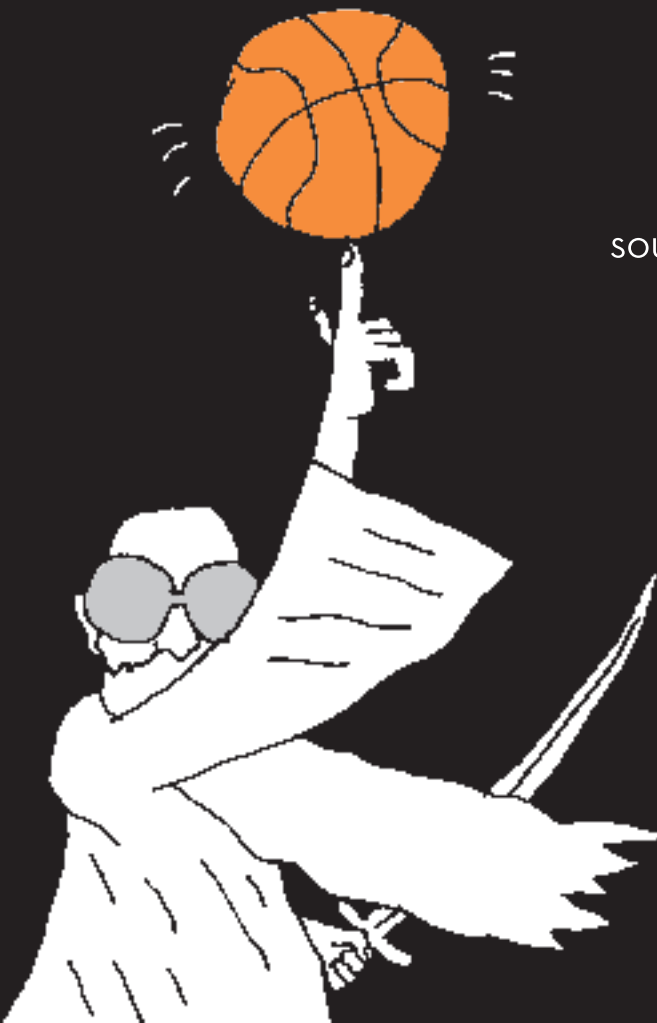
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## Glass Candy



**A NEW JERSEY NOISE-ROCK IMPRINT BIRTHS A NEW SUB-LABEL AND KICKSTARTS AN ITALO-DISCO REVOLUTION.**

**AFTER DARK**  
Italians Do It Better/US/CD

It's rare for a compilation to introduce a new brand of music and simultaneously stand alone as a great record from end to end. Like Brian Eno's *No New York*, a seminal overview of the city's late 70's no-wave scene, *After Dark*, a recent sampler from upstart imprint Italians Do It Better, achieves this same feat more than competently. Coincidentally, 1978 New York also proves to be a perfect entry point for *After Dark*, a compilation of new Italo-disco/art-rock tracks from an offshoot imprint of the noisy, no-wave-inspired Troubleman Unlimited label.

These songs, previously only available as vinyl singles, showcase a group of artists breaking new ground by putting a gloomy, dreamy spin on the aforementioned Italo—a European disco sound of the 1980s made famous by Giorgio Moroder. Mostly unknown in America, the genre stayed breathing over the years due to its influence on electroclash, house, and the odd Scandinavian nu-disco revivalist like Sally Shapiro or Lindström. For the most part though, Italo's been left untouched, partly because it's viewed as the ancestor to some of the 1980s' schmaltziest Eurodisco hits (see Taco's "Puttin' on the Ritz"). But, the *After Dark* artists retain only Italo's bouncy, arpeggiated synths (none of its tackiness) and add a deeper noir to create an intensely moody vibe throughout.

Portland's Glass Candy, who formerly trafficked in jagged noise rock, opens the disc with "Rolling Down the Hills," a track that sets the collection's dark-yet-buoyant tone. It pulses with disco elements—horns accenting a deliberate thump—while singer Ida No's ice-cold vocals drift above the mix. Later in the set, Glass Candy contributes three more songs (all covers), and they sound equally accomplished. Their version of Kraftwerk's crucial "Computer Love" swaps the original's chilly robotics for warm, dancing synths and, on a remake of Bell Epoque's "Miss Broadway," Ida No reverently evokes Debbie Harry amid guitarist Johnny Jewel's crisp, elegant production.

Chromatics, who employ a similar aesthetic but with a more somber approach, provide two more of *After Dark*'s highlights with "Hands in the Dark" and "In the City," the latter a haunting number with a twinkling keyboard, staccato guitar, and swooshing synths accompanying frontwoman's Ruth Radelet's bleak portrait of after-hours city life. Their final offering, "Killing Spree," is one of the few missteps here—as a brief instrumental demo it's by no means unpleasant but only serves as filler.

The other members of Italians' small roster—Indeep, Mirage, Professor Genius, and Farah—round out *After Dark*'s remaining tracks and almost all excel. The only track to actually dislike is Farah's stream-of-consciousness dirge "Law of Life," a song whose poor lyrics and vocal delivery spoil its winning instrumentation. Indeep's excellent reworking of "Last Night a DJ Saved My Life" offers the album's bounciest cut, and Mirage uses a vocoder (thankfully, the only artist to do so here) to imbue tracks such as "Lady Operator" and the stellar "Lake of Dreams" with a druggy, pulsating persistence.

On these 14 neatly packaged and well-sequenced tracks, *After Dark* succeeds on several levels: it aims for a nighttime mood, nails it, and re-introduces Italo—a genre some thought better left alone—as something new, unique, even sexy, for a new millennium. And, like Eno's *No New York*, the record presents (if not invents) a subgenre that most folks didn't know existed and would be remiss to not investigate. *Joe Colly*



**COCOON COMPILATION 6**

Cocoon/GER/CD

The seventh installment in this unmixed compilation series from Sven Väth's mammoth Frankfurt-based club's in-house label is its strongest yet. Aimed squarely at the dancefloor, nearly all of *G's* tracks deliver peak-time 4/4 techno builders, most with subtle trance overtones and distinct styles. Deep, murky snares in Stephan Bodzin's dark dancefloor beauty "Triebsand" loosen up into soaring overtones of Frankfurt trance, while MyMy's electrifying opener, "Fast Freeze," glides easily into elegant, big-room tech-house. The unmixed style of this series is not only ideal for DJs, but also offers a nod to Väth's early days as DJ, where he famously preferred letting one track simply fade into the next. *Janet Tzou*

**LION VS. DRAGON IN DUB**

Trojan/UK/CD

Illustrator/journalist Edwin Pouncey (a.k.a. Savage Pencil) has long been inspired by the sounds of dub; indeed, dub's otherworldly sensibility filters through his graphic work. On this cryptically named compilation, Pouncey pulls together choice deejay cuts from U-Roy, Prince Jazzbo, Ranking Joe, and Jah Whoosh, two *nyabingi* numbers by Ras Michael (in the guise of Dadawah), and a boatload of mind-bending dubs, courtesy of King Tubby, Lee Perry, and Augustus Pablo. It's a compelling set that never lets the tension drop for a moment, despite the inclusion of dub fakery in the form of "Pablo in Black Ark" (which is still a killer despite not featuring Pablo and not being recorded at the Ark). *David Katz*

**GILLES PETERSON DIGS AMERICA VOL. 2**

Ubiquity/US/CD

The dusty record bag of tastemaker supreme Gilles Peterson has most DJs seething with envy. How nice it is that he once again lets others in on the stateside rarities that might have otherwise gone forgotten. Whether it's some of his favorite artists (Lorez Alexander's melancholic ballad "Wishin'"), early recordings from better-known names (Al Jarreau's playful vocals soaring atop some top jazz on "My Favorite Things"), or gems from unknown talents (The Diddy's spaced-out soul ballad "Intergalatic Love Song"), Peterson's picks are astutely chosen with soul and jazz in mind. You can either personally search for each song and be out thousands of dollars, or just make it easier on yourself and dig this well-compiled volume of delights. *Velanche*

**ROMANOWSKI**

**PARTY IN MY PANTS REMIXED**

Trouser Trout/US/CD

For those unfamiliar with Swiss-born, Cali-based artist, musician, and DJ Romanowski, dude is dually influenced by collage and hip-hop. His visual artworks are intricate 3-D assemblages that include found objects, spray cans, and action figures. Likewise, Romanowski's hybrid rocksteady/hip-hop music is part sample patchwork, part funk, and always dope. So it makes sense that Roman packed as many artists as possible on this two-disc remix collection, including eclectic kindred souls DJ Smash, J-Boogie, Quantic, Zeph, and Up, Bustle & Out. There's surprises galore, like DJ Sureshot's bouncy, B.T. Express-style "Train Song," Bing Ji Ling's sassy electrofunk version of "Dance," and M3's wicked "Taliban Rockers" edit. The only way to survive Romanowski's glorious chaos: Git on down! *Tomas Palermo*

**SCI.FI.LO.FI VOLUME 1: ANDREW WEATHERALL**

Soma/UK/CD

Andrew Weatherall, the man who put half the hyphens into rock music, has decided to take 'em all out. Weatherall is the man responsible for putting house and rock together; for faxing post-punk back to itself with remixes of Primal Scream, New Order, and My Bloody Valentine. But, as proven by the past few Two Lone Swordsman releases, Weatherall is obsessed with rock 'n' roll in its original state. His kick-off for Soma's *Sci.Fi.Lo.Fi* DJ-mix series, documenting top jocks' favorite "organic" sounds, has every kind of "rock" you could ask for, sans hyphen—from Gene Vincent to The Fall, Killing Joke to the brilliant Pacific Northwest R&B unknowns Joe Boot & the Fabulous Winds. *Justin Hopper*

**THE PORTABLE SUPERSOUND**

Smalltown Supersound/NOR/CD

The 12 tracks here encompass a broad range of styles and moods to augment your headspace in multifaceted ways. At one extreme there's Arp's tranquil pulsations and pastoral melodies (quite Cluster & Eno); at the other is the Lift Boys (Eye from The Boredoms) taking disco the furthest out it's ever gone, with tablas, sitars, nipple gongs, and maniacally manipulated jet-engine roars. In between those poles, Tussle tips its cowbell and hi-hats to ESG; 120 Days updates Hawkwind with an acidic motorik chug; Sunburned Hand of the Man offers a pan-ethnic, tribal-percussion workout; and diskJokke, Lindstrøm, and Bjørn Torske get both cheeky and elegant with cosmic disco tropes. There's more, and it's all mostly a weird, wonderful mishmash. *Dave Segal*

**THE SECOND MARRIAGE RECORDS COMPILATION**

Marriage/US/CD

It seems like Portland's got an average of two bands for every block, and at least one of them is pretty damn good. That certainly got plays a role in the fact that about every comp to come out of that Cascadian band/artist breeding ground takes up two discs. The latest showpiece from flagship of Northwest weird, Marriage Records, gives us a 26-song marathon that passes as easily (though a hell of a lot more interesting) as a walk to the corner. Highlights include Privacy's dust-coated folk lullaby "It's a Fever," Mt. Eerie's live-recorded, shattered, perfectly awkward metal tear "In Moonlight" and Yacht's latest grungy, "yay"-vibe-filled "Don't Stay in Bed." Well worth tracking down. *Michael Byrne*

**VINTAGE GROOVES: FUNK VOLUME 1**

Seamless/UK/CD

In the second installment of DJ/music historian Ian Dewhirst's *Vintage Grooves* series, the best funk singles of the '70s are carefully compiled into a party-ready double-disc set. With many of today's indie labels putting such a strong emphasis on digging up and reissuing the rarest funk and soul records possible, it's actually good to hear more recognizable tracks here such as The O'Jays cautionary classic "For the Love of Money." If there's one drawback to this compilation it's that Dewhirst's idea of funk can be too loose at times. As catchy as Cheryl Lynn's "Got to Be Real" is, the song is pure disco. But a few technical blips don't stop this collection from being largely enjoyable. *Max Herman*

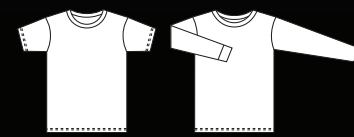


Justin Martin

**CHAOS RESTORED WITH JUSTIN MARTIN**

Buzzin' Fly/UK/CD

"Ghetto Train" got it going on, but you don't need Martin's debut mix of funky, jacking house to hear his track, which is sharper than much of what surrounds it here. Martin, along with Claude VonStroke, is currently making Frisco capital-F fabulous with his ability to both suss out dancefloor-igniting tracks and create his own. So why does *Chaos Restored* only intermittently go bananas? The "Train" rolls in around the 15-minute mark, dragging some serious weight (Spincycle, Jimpster's remix of Motorcitysoul's "Aura"), but loses a bit of steam, despite both men (the narrator on Martin Landsky's "Let Me Dance") and congas coaxing you on. The tempo seldom changes—until Martin's "Stoopit Crunk-III Hyphy Mix" of Worthy's "Crack-E!" arrives, blips and bleeps flaring out over a backdrop of finger snaps. Now that's unusual. Martin might've switched it up more throughout, but *Chaos* is still fairly beautiful in theory. *Rachel Shimp*

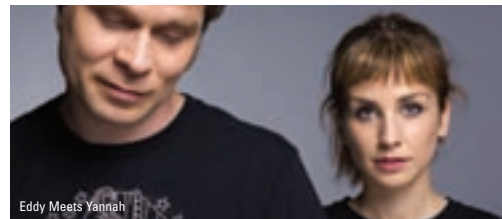


- I. GHOSTLY TEE (BLACK ON GREY)
- II. GHOSTLY TEE (BLACK ON BLACK)
- III. GHOSTLY TEE (ORANGE ON OLIVE)
- IV. AVANT-POP TEE
- V. SKULLHEART TEE
- VI. SPECTRAL TEE (RED ON NAVY)
- VII. SKULLHEART / SPECTRAL GRID
- VIII. SKELETUX LONG SLEEVE
- IX. OSBORNE TEE
- X. MOUTH TO MOUTH TEE
- XI. ASA BREED TEE
- XII. BoyCatBird SPACE TEE





**En Tu Casa**  
By **Nick Chacona**  
HOUSEKEEPING, FROM TECH AND MINIMAL TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



San Francisco's **Justin Martin** will be spending some time going through MySpace fan mail after the release of his latest single, "Night Owl," and his first solo mix CD, *Chaos Restored*, on **Ben Watt's** Buzzin Fly imprint. "Night Owl" has been garnering serious accolades since the beginning of the summer when Ben was caning it on CD-R. Crafted in a truly contemporary production style, the track exploits traditional Latin rhythms with bubbling electronic bleeps and booming bit-reduced bass to the most tremendous effect. The original is finely paired with a mix by labelmates **Manoo** and **Francois A**, which heads straight to the deeper atmospheric realm.

Weird fact: Martin had previously partnered with Chicago veteran **Johnny Fiasco** to mix an *OM Sessions* double-CD last year, and now Fiasco has been enlisted by Florida-based Agave Records to mix the second release in their *Nectar* series, to drop around the same time as Martin's *Chaos Restored*. Comprised of tracks from a who's-who of today's bump-house scene, such as **Atarko**, **Rhythm Plate**, **Marko Militano**, and the **Sound Republic**, *Nectar Vol. 2* encapsulates a classic Fiasco set, where deep, jazzy vibes sit alongside dancefloor burners, keeping things ever-jacking. To seal the deal, Fiasco closes with the classic **Jazzanova** remix of **Ian Pooley's** "What's Your Number," which is known as a genre-defining moment in the emergence of broken beat.

**Michael Reinboth's** Compost Records charges ahead with a slew of new releases lined up for late fall, beginning with an EP from the forthcoming *Future Sound of Jazz Vol. 11* comp, featuring tracks from **Joash**, **No Theory**, and **Neil Landstrumm**. Next up on Compost's Black Label sub-imprint is **Alex Attias'** latest project with vocalist **Mustang**, which ventures into uptempo nu-jazz territory (though two tracks are strongly rooted in 4/4). But the release that probably takes the cake for Single of the Month is the remix EP culled from the sophomore album of Croats **Eddie Meets Yannah**, in which

Sweden's **Simbad** and Baltimore's **Karizma** go head-to-head on some true future-house stylings.

Compost's partner in crime, the young Drumpoet Community, based out of Zurich, has been making some waves in the never-ending reverberations of "Rej"-esque tech-house. Next to grace their grooves is a self-titled EP from the **Lost Men**. Comprised of **Bernd Kunz**, **Alex Dallas**, and **Alex Guastafson**, who previously ran the Straight Ahead imprint from 1998 to 2004, Lost Men is their first studio project together in over four years. The culmination of their efforts is an excellent array of synth-driven house with a heavy dub inflections.

Canada's urban paradise, Montreal, may be mourning the migration of its beloved **Fred Everything** to sunny California, but plenty more are holding it down in the land of Poutine. Monsieur **Christian Pronovost** is so busy juggling the duties of record-shop owner, music consultant, DJ, and producer, that he probably won't get a chance to even read this. Already the mastermind behind the Restricted Access mix of **Xpress 2's** "Kill 100," Pronovost's next release as **Lost Heroes**, "Bambatta" (Innervisions), is an Afro-tinged number laced with sci-fi synths that will satisfy the cosmic urges in all of us.

Around the corner from Pronovost, Bombay Records also makes itself heard with "Promise Land," by Russian composer Nikolai Serebryakov as **Koyla**. In classic Bombay fashion, "Promise Land" is a smooth balance of chunky beats, emotive pads and soulful vocals provided by **Jrod Indigo**. Remix duties here are handled by **Sean Dimitirie** and label boss **Nav Bhinder** himself, adding a sax for that extra jazzy touch.



**Bubble Metropolis**  
By **M1 Tronik**  
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Back in the '90s, the Schatrax label's mysteriously untitled series of 12"s baffled techno lovers everywhere with a wide-ranging amalgam of electronica, from the deep and dark to the melodic and contemplative. After a long hiatus, **Josh Brent** (a.k.a. **Schatrax**) returns with the *A Question of Time* EP (Sister Phunk). These two tracks pick up where the original series left off, the key cut being the title track, a four-on-the-floor growler with floating synths on top.

**Droido's** new release on Missive is also synth-driven, but with a deep techno-house slant. Look out for "Missing Link," which features some backwards masking, and "Monaco Blue," which is pure morning music. Think *Âme*, but with fewer theatrics, and you're pretty close to what this EP is all about. Does anyone actually play this kind of music in clubs anymore? I'm curious.

One release I know will be getting a lot of play is **Housemeister's** *Radio4You* EP (Allyoucanbeat). A bit of neo-rave, 8-bit, indie-techno flavor and odd samples combine to create some manic lo-fi music. My favorite is the first track, "Mika," with an arpeggiated melody that sounds like it's straight out of 1992. Will the rave ever die?

**Alland Byallo** continues to impress with his relentless output of original tunes and remixes. This time he takes French hottie **DJ Karmina's** "Last Call for Gate Number" (Neuton) and refines it into a spaced-out minimal freak-out he calls his "Flight Is Delayed" mix. Hopefully DJ's will make the connection.

The 12th in the *Battle* series on Dialect's offshoot label of the same name is now out. This time it's **DJ Naughty** vs. Moodmusic's **Sasse**. "All Good" is a simmering tech-funk cut that comes with a great remix by Sasse, and "Sick at Home" really veers more into deep-house territory than techno, but DJ Naughty's remix does away with any of that business and infuses the track with some nice synth work.

Never to be outdone in the "nice synth work" department are those Teutonic grandfathers of tech, **Kraftwerk**. Astralwerks has released the surprising **Hot Chip** remixes of "Aerodynamik" and "La Forme." I say "surprising" because since when do indie bands know how to remix dance music? It's normally the other way around, isn't it? In any event, I really like what they've done here. The first mix beefs up the rhythm and boldly infuses some additional melodic elements, nearly making the mix a new track altogether. The second mix is an 11-and-a-half-minute trip that ventures in and out of ambience, with some effective transitions that make this a very impressive effort.

Taking things much deeper, my surprise tune of the month comes from **Eve White**. (Turns out Eve White is two guys, **Motec** and **Lars Kroker**.) Their limited vinyl release, "The Trail" b/w "He Said, She Said" (Contentismissing), is a perfect blend of mid-tempo techno and acoustic stylings. Fans of Sentrall and Careless will love this, so find it.

**Kaliber** has dropped another anonymous bomb on us. This one is Kaliber 15, and comes with two untitled tracks. The first features a strange melody that sounds like some kind of picked instrument being played too fast. The b-side is funky, driving, and minimal with, yes, another weird repetitive sound for the rave massive. Check 'em both at [www.myspace.com/kalibermusic/kaliber](http://www.myspace.com/kalibermusic/kaliber).

Finally, Matt Edwards returns with another extended treat as **Radioslave**, this time for the insomniacs. "No Sleep 3" (Dedication Sound Channel Mix EQ'D), on Edwards' Rekids label, is galactic techno jazz-funk. There's only one track, but in typical Radioslave fashion, it's more than 13 minutes long, so put it on when it's time for a snog or a bathroom break.

# RHYMESAYERS

**MAC LETHAL**  
11:11



The debut full-length album from Kansas City's native son **Mac Lethal**. One of *URB's* **Next 100** Mac Lethal has been making a name for himself for years. Whether he's terrorizing rappers at events like **Scribble Jam ('02 MC Battle Champion)** or earning his road stripes touring with artists like **Atmosphere**, **Sage Francis** or **P.O.S.** Mac Lethal has arrived and he's brought his signature sarcastic observation on life with him.

**GRAYSKUL**  
Bloody Radio



**Onry Ozzborn** (Court Draven) & **JFK** (Court Magnus) return with their latest opus **Bloody Radio**. A conceptual masterpiece that serves itself as reverse brainwash music for today's contemporary hip-hop radio listener, typically force-fed imaginary genres. **Bloody Radio** features guest appearances by **Slug of Atmosphere**, **Aesop Rock**, **Pigeon John**, **Cage** & **Andrea Zollo** of **Pretty Girls Makes Graves**.

**ATMOSPHERE**  
Sad Clown Bad Fall 10



Hot off the heels of the *Sad Clown Bad Summer* #9, **Slug & Ant** change colors and heat up the Fall with volume 10 of the infamous **Atmosphere** Sad Clown series. **Sad Clown Bad Fall 10** is another exclusive limited treat to hold us over until the release of Atmosphere's 6th official studio album due early '08.

**ATMOSPHERE**  
Sad Clown Bad Summer #9



Just in time for a little Summer fun **Slug & Ant** drop volume 9 of their infamous *Sad Clown* series to hold us over while they put the finishing touches on their 6th official studio album **When Life Gives You Lemons...** due early next year.

**MF DOOM**  
MM...FOOD?



**Seconds Anyone?** After being out of print for close to two years, **MM...FOOD?** returns with a **Bonus DVD** with over an hour of live performances and behind the scenes footage. The initial pressing of this reissue also comes in a **special limited candy bar chocolate scratch-n-sniff silver mylar package with a bonus poster and sticker to boot.**

**BROTHER ALI**  
The Undisputed Truth



"If his first album, *Shadows on the Sun* - one of 2003's best hip hop releases - was meant to introduce Ali...then *The Undisputed Truth* seals the damn deal."  
**URB** ★★★★★

"Ant perfectly underscores Ali's gruff cadence, simultaneously self-assured and stressed, with a melodic lode that crunches soul vocals underneath loops of bluesy guitar."  
**Spin** ★★★★★

**COMING SOON:**

**ATMOSPHERE**  
Sad Clown  
Bad Winter #11

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Dear Abbey

**ATMOSPHERE**  
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## After Silence By Martin De Leon THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



My Education



Pjusk



Mofongo

Berlin, unlike any other city I've ever visited, recently reminded me that a grimy life still has much to offer. Poor neighborhoods, graffiti-ridden walls, and abandoned buildings are portals to other worlds. But what does post-industrial geography sound like?

Puerto Rico is not exactly a mecca for IDM. That's why producer **Mofongo** is a rare treat. A former roommate of laptop whiz **Hrvatski**, Mofongo shapes rhythms like silly putty on his terrific EP, *Tumbao* (Aaagoo). Like a *Boricua* Fennesz, Mofongo's songs like "Tumbao" and "Vermont" click, thump, and hide layers of percussion with subtlety.

Who needs drums, though? New York's **Dragons of Zynth** released a great 7" in honor of Hurricane Katrina. "Xerathyn (Between Two Hurricanes)" is out on Gigantic Records and swells with pretty guitar feedback and an almost drum-less bliss. Produced by TV on the Radio dude David Sitek, this should be in everyone's hands by the time their debut album, *Coronation Thieves*, is out.

Maybe not dragons, but certainly ghosts creep into **Pjusk's** eerie electronic compositions on their record, *Sart* (12K). Norway's finest ambient duo is like an e-Slayer, where evil synths pitter-patter on "Tander" and it gets no happier by album's end. If you're tired of that Nick Drake CD, pop in this doom for sure.

Videos for experimental music are just as depressing. But avantrapper **High Priest** (member of the now reunited **Anti-Pop Consortium**) just released a strange and beautiful video for his single, "Pitfalls" (Sound-Ink). Directed by **Asif Mian**, who has done videos for Aesop Rock and The Roots, the eerie critique of the militarization of minorities is both poignant and needed. Watch it at [www.evaq.com/pitfalls](http://www.evaq.com/pitfalls).

Showing off its cinematic qualities, too, is Austin's **My Education** on the new split 12" with New Jersey's death-metal-of-indie-rap dudes, **dälek**. "Spiegel im Spiegel" (Thirty Ghosts) was written by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt

in 1978 and is re-interpreted in a beautiful, twangy, Texas way by the instrumental sextet. **Dälek**, on the other hand, turns it into a loud, fuzzy piece that masterfully uses the prickly organ of My Education's version and smashes it against their metal machine music.

In awesome news, **Le Tigre's** Kathleen Hanna is teaching grad-level classes at NYU this fall. How great would it be to talk Nirvana and feminist literature while humming Bikini Kill songs?

Like Bikini Kill, Israel's **Monotonix** uses punk energy and wild stage antics to teach us that most American indie rock bands are wusses. The Tel Aviv all-dude trio plays some raw live shows, nicely matched on their self-titled record on member **Ami Shalev's** own Fastmusic label. "Summers and Autumns" blazes with dirty guitars and the energy of Israel's street noise.

Other news of note includes a new hipster Latin night in New York called **Nacothex**, run by DJs **Marcelo Cuning** and **Amylulita**. It will host a **Café Tacuba** album-release party and make you shake it to *cumbias*.

Spilling more gutter dance beats is **James Murphy**, whose lethargic croon is featured on **LCD Soundsystem's** new remix EP, *A Bunch of Stuff* (Capitol). (Keep an eye out for his *Fabriclive* contribution this month, too.) **Soulwax** and **Carl Craig** drop nice mixes here, but it's **Franz Ferdinand's** nutso version of the hit "All of My Friends" that is gold. Also of note: the fifth instalment in The Social Registry's 7" series, featuring female duo **I.U.D.'s** clanging beats ("Goat Pussy") and abstract melodies ("FF'ing"), similar to member **Lizzie Bougatosos'** terrific other band, Gang Gang Dance. Where do we go next?



## Leftfield Guest Reviews: Sweet Steve

DJ Sweet Steve's musical career has been a bit out of the ordinary—quite a bit. Alongside best friend Chris Manak (a.k.a. Peanut Butter Wolf), Steve got his start the way most do: collecting records led to DJing, DJing led to producing. But in the early '90s, the San Jose, CA-based Steve dropped out of the music industry to get married and take a job in the real world. Nearly 10 years later, he found himself back behind the decks for PB Wolf's 20th anniversary tour, a decision that also prompted the revival of Baron Zen, Steve's side-project from the late '80s, whose *At the Mall*, a "best of" collection—if a band with no previous releases can have such a thing—was released for the first time last year on Stones Throw. A wonderfully stripped-down, ragtag collection of hip-hop, disco, pop, and electro, September's *At the Mall: Remixes* (Stones Throw) just may have sparked the second coming of Sweet Steve. Here's what the dude had to say about a few leftfield tracks we threw at him.

Ross Holland

[www.myspace.com/djsweetsteve](http://www.myspace.com/djsweetsteve)

### NO AGE

"MY LIFE'S ALRIGHT WITHOUT YOU"  
(FROM *WEIRDO RIPPERS*)

FatCat/UK/CD

This is like three songs in one. It opens with raw drums reminiscent of Joy Division, then dives into some Jesus & Mary Chain distortion before bringing it home with a 1970s Ramones-inspired melody. This song is like a music-appreciation course in punk and goth. I like it—especially the drum and guitar sounds. *Sweet Steve*

### DIPLO/BART SIMPSON

"DO THE BART MAN"  
(DIPLO'S BART SO SO KRISPY EDIT)"

US/download

Not your typical Diplo remix. He takes the beat from the Beastie Boys classic "Paul Revere" and added a few new kicks and fills over it. I couldn't really listen to it for long because I couldn't get past Bart Simpson trying to be an MC. It needed harder-hitting beats to distract me from MC Bart. *Sweet Steve*

### MATH HEAD X PASSIONS

"TURN THE MUSIC UP (ROUGH MIX)"

US/download

This song has some interesting sounds. It combines 1990s house with a little mid-1980s Juan Atkins electro during the breaks. I love the Model 500 sounds in the middle, but could do without the rave keyboards. It would also be better as an instrumental jam. *Sweet Steve*

### SPANK ROCK AND BENNY BLANCO

"SHAKE THAT"  
(FROM *THE BANGERS & CASH EP*)

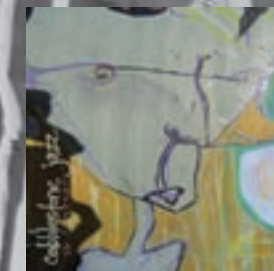
Downtown/US/12

Now this is what I like! I'm a little biased because I love Miami bass, and this is a classic throwback with a little updated rhyming style. The chorus is traditional Luke Skyywalker, with some funky-fresh keys. I like the hype beats. You can drop this at any club and get the girls out on the dancefloor. *Sweet Steve*

# LISTEN TO THIS AD!



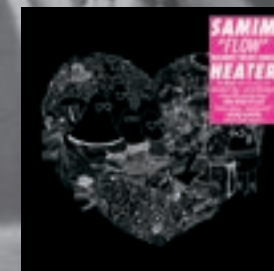
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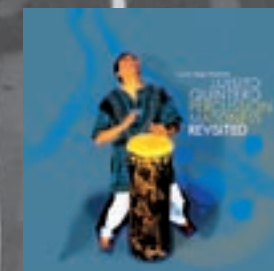
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**Broken Business**  
By Peter Nicholson  
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Before we head off for our usual globetrotting *tour de bruk*, I thought we'd start off with a small dose of homegrown goodness. **Sutro** is a San Francisco-based trio headed by long-time player **Tyler Stone**, and the lady herself turns in a very nice busted mix of their "Affected" on the new single for Decoy Recordings. Definitely uptempo but Stone's muted vocals and some chilled-out pads keep things smooth.

Alright, time to catch our connection to NYC before we head elsewhere. Brooklyn's Bastard Jazz has a corker of a new artist in the form of **Rob Watson** (a.k.a. **The Magic Fly**). Plenty of wacked-out reggae goodness on *The Champion Mushroom* EP, but for our purposes the swaying skank of the title track is the best kind of leftfield funk, with a rich b-line and raw drums.

Okay, enough stateside slabs. Let's go straight to the underside of the globe, where **Lewis McCallum** has a new one coming for Antipodean. "Fly or Die" is one for the early hours, with a spaced-out hip-hop vibe, but I'm more interested in "Look Around," with the sweet vocals of **Cherie Mathieson** waiting over some warbling pitch bends, fat horns, and swinging finger pop.



Keeping things in a Latin vein, gotta shout out the new disc from Tru Thoughts alum **Diesler**. This one's on Freestyle and it's full of bright piano, sparkly percussion, and a truly twisted bassline that's been phased and compressed within an inch of its life. The b-side has some decent raps from **Testament** as a nice bonus.

How far can we get from Puerto Rico and Latin vibes? How about Stockholm, Sweden and the futuristic funk of **Opolopo**? I first got hip to him via some Michael Jackson and Marvin Gaye bootlegs he did; now he's gone a bit more legit, doing remixes for the likes of **Lanu**, and his "Life Is a Dance" (Especial), with **Amalia**, is still going strong. An album is in the works. Right now, keep an ear out for his remix of **Chamade Beat** feat. **Mpho Skeef**'s "Keep Walking"—smooth, bruk swing just dripping soul.

Must tip old fave **Colonel Red**, who's teamed up with new-to-me **C.o.n.e.** for a two-tracker that's self-released on Crazybreed. Someone forgot to put title tracks on this CD-R, but no prob—both featured Red's tenor front-and-center over some serious boom-clack bass 'n' MPC action. Ruff and squelchy bizness!

Well, let's wrap things up by going back to Cali and U.K.-to-L.A. transplant **Daz-I-Kue**. He's back with another Blood Fire installment and he goes head to head with **Gil Scott-Heron** to serve up a sweet version of "The Bottle," on the classy 4/4 disco tip, and a choppy, bruk freak-out based on a live jam. Cowbells, rumbly Rhodes, and a call to the conga line—olé!



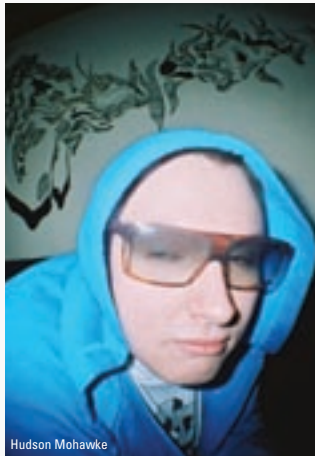
**Read the Label**  
By Jesse "Drosco" Serwer  
HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



While my job here is to fill you in on new heat, all I really want to hear these days are the classics. Two records I always find myself returning to are Jay-Z's *Reasonable Doubt* and Camp Lo's *Uptown Saturday Night*. I probably listen to those more often *now* than when they dropped in '96 and '97, respectively. If you're on the page with me here, you too may have wondered what happened to producer **Ski**, who helped shape the aforementioned albums before disappearing sometime after "Streets Is Watching." Now known as **Ski Beatz**, the NC-via-NYC beatmaker recently reemerged with an album, *Half Man, Half Amazing* and single, "Ticket for 2" b/w "Pages of the Past," on his own Redefinition Records. While the a-side is a rewarding reunion with **Camp Lo**, the gem is "Pages of the Past," an instrumental fashioned from Freda Payne's "The Road We Didn't Take." Sparklin'!

The first taste of Read the Label favorite **Guilty Simpson**'s upcoming Stones Throw LP, *Ode to the Ghetto*, "Man's World" finds the Detroit denizen spitting over a **J Dilla**-ized take on the James Brown classic. While Guilty comes strong on the tough-love-themed joint, he turns in a better performance on the a-side of **Buff 1**'s "Supreme" b/w "Pretty Baby" (A Side Worldwide). Simpson decimates the booming, synth-heavy beat by **Waaheed**, while both sides feature consistent, if not mind-blowing, performances from Ann Arbor, MI native Buff 1.

Like clockwork, Ireland's All City Records seems to drop a new platter from **Heralds of Change**, the production duo of **Hudson Mohawke** and **Mike Slott**, every month. "Bopgunn," the lead track on their latest, *Secrets*, represents a new direction for the pair, with singer **OlivierDAYSOUL** dropping some P-Funk-inspired vox over a manic track reminiscent of OutKast's "Bombs Over Baghdad." Three other tracks featuring MCs **Oddissee**, **Trek Life**, and **Unknown** are equally strong, if slower and closer to the Heralds' previous Dilla-in-space explorations.



On *Bangers and Cash: The Adventures of Spankrock and Benny Blanco*, Spank and Disco D-protégé **Benny Blanco** pay homage to **2 Live Crew** with an EP's worth of tracks based around samples of the Miami sex-rap kings. While there's some dead horse-beating going on, sure, these tracks will make a nice addition to hipster booty-bass DJ sets worldwide.

**Y Society** is the pairing of Boston rapper **Insight** and Washington D.C. producer **DJ Damu**; the group's first platter, "Never Off (On & On)" b/w "Dizzy" (Tres Recordings), evokes classic Hieroglyphics without sounding like a throwback. If the rest of the beats on their upcoming LP are as good as the acid-jazz-y "Never Off" (I think this sample was in a Cee-Lo song?) this one will be banging on the Beltway and in the Big Dig.

Speaking of throwbacks, a blast from the past arrives this month in the form of **Rob-O**'s *Rhyme Pro* (Sound of Dissent) compilation. Anyone with a working knowledge of golden-era East Coast rap will recall Rob-O as the key MC in **Pete Rock**'s group, **INI**. A collection of Rob-O solo joints recorded between 1994 and 1999, *Rhyme Pro*'s highlights predictably come in the form of **Chocolate Boy Wonder** productions like "Superspectacular," but every track is strong. There may never be a Pete and CL reunion, but a reformed INI would make a good consolation. Onward to the future.



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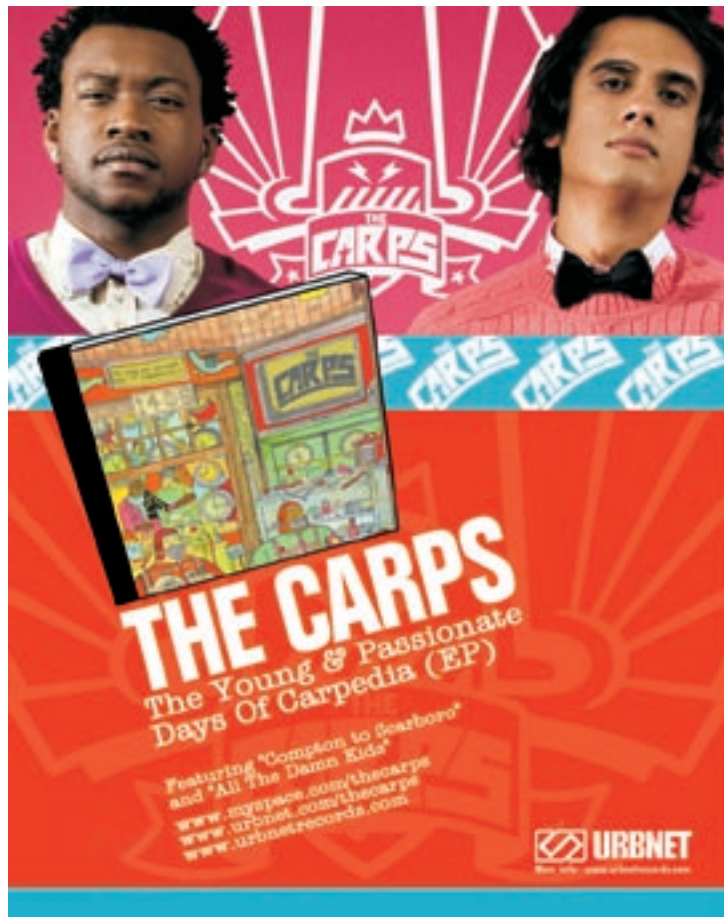
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## Basic Needs By Kid Kameleon

LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



El Carnicero photo by Penni Baldwin



Benga photo by Shaun Bloodworth



Jahcoozi

A fateful and unholy meeting between a latte and a laptop slowed me down this month and killed my bass vibe for a bit, but thanks to producers coming out of the woodwork in droves, hella sweet tunes save the day again. First to mention is the Dress 2 Sweat label, which offers remixes of Rich Boy's "Throw Some D's" and Dem Franchize Boyz's "Lean Wit It" by number one Scottish B-more/electro/crunk (say wut?!) producer **Rustie**. Unstoppable. **Dikulous'** (one half of **Non Stop DJs**) "U Know What to Doo" and **Pistol Pete's** take on "Knuck If You Buck" complete the assault, and it's play-every-single-track-in-the-club good. **Sinden** and **Scottie B** are already biggin' it up. Thanks to Richard of Stuff Records for the tip!

My man Sean from Brighton, U.K. is taking the monthly sound of Square Roots, his eclectic dubstep/electro-bass party at Volks, and making it a label. First up is a 12" from **Ital Tek** out of Bristol. The a-side is "Deep Pools" and it's a real tear-jerker; the kind of track that makes you want to grab a loved one and hold 'em tight. The b-side is entitled "Wind Tunnel," and if it's anything like the crunchy goodness of Ital Tek's Planet Mu release, we're in for quite a treat. The second release from Square Roots is expected from **Milanese**, and promises to be rough as well. Check 'em out at [www.myspace.com/square\\_roots](http://www.myspace.com/square_roots).

It's great to see someone like **Rogue State** taking the time to work directly with one of the most original voices from Jamaica, Raggamuffin **Daddy Freddy**. "Very Dangerous" b/w "Wicked 'n' Bad" are equal parts 8-bit, shuffle, gruff, and smooth.

In an instrumental vein, the best thing on Tempa in a while is "Night" b/w "Drumz West" and "Emotions" by various combinations of **Benga** and **Coki**. "Night" tore apart the dancefloor when I saw **M.R.K. 1** play it a few months back, synth zaps making the kids go crazy. It's also worth noting that elder U.S. dubstep/2-step statesman **Jason Mundo** has

got Dub Assembly 5 ("Down in the South" b/w "Dub of the Dead") and 6 ("Low" b/w "U Get None") ready to go. As dark and as dry as the Texas desert he comes from.

**Starkey** and **Dev79** have finally gotten the first and second singles on Slit Jockey Records out the door, with **El Carnicero** coming straight out of Indiana with guns blazing for *The Butcher* EP. "Next Kingdom," featuring original vocals by the mighty **Warrior Queen**, is like a classic Belgian take on grime, and "Northgate Riddim" (with **Tiny Bee**) features the best grime production I've heard outside the U.K. since **Shadetek**. The bouncing "Mosquito Riddim" (with **Faction G**) and a trio of instrumentals rounds out a stellar release, and also look out for Starkey's *Corner Store* EP, featuring **Xploder** and a **Mathhead** remix too.

Also, you don't want to miss the mighty sound of **Ghislain Poirier's** "Blazin," the first single from his upcoming album on Ninja Tune. **Face-T** gets the party hype on the mic for one of Ghis' signature bangers. **The Bug** and **DJ C** round it out with remixes, the first with a heavy dubstep influence and the second in loping, trademark Boston Bounce style. Blazin'!

Two final shouts. Number one, all I really have to say is the name and a release: **Diplo** and *Hollertronix #7*. Buy it for the "Harder Better Faster Strong" remix alone. Tune of the year. Secondly, **Jahcoozi** from Berlin has dropped the *BLN* EP and the full-length *Blitz 'N Ass* on A-Sound. Glitch, soul, and dance—look out!



## Bass Guest Reviews: Benji B

Benji B is one of those rare radio DJs whose musical past is colored by more than just stacks of old vinyl in his parents' basement. He has played saxophone since age seven, and by 16 was performing in clubs throughout London. (He even spent 10 years teaching the gamelan.) Benji first teamed up with Gilles Peterson in his late teens, producing the *Worldwide* show for Kiss FM, and when the show moved to the BBC, he became the national broadcaster's youngest ever program producer. He still loves the crate-digging sounds that he's known for unearthing in today's hip-hop, future jazz, and broken beat scenes, but this time around he gave us his favorite low-end treats of the moment. Here's a taste of what you'll catch on Benji's BBC 1Xtra show. *Derek Gray*  
[www.benjib.com](http://www.benjib.com)

### SKREAM

"PASS THE RED STRIPE"

Soul Jazz/Uk/12

Destroying soundsystems worldwide with his DJ sets and productions alike, Skream has proved himself to be a true master of sonics at just 21 years old. His musicality and mature approach to writing tunes means that pretty much any of his recent records would be eligible for mention here. The one that has been causing maximum damage all over the festival circuit for me this year is "Pass the Red Stripe." Not much to say other than if you play this record at the right time to the right audience you will have no choice but to reload it many, many times. Careful you don't cause a riot. *Benji B*

### FLYING LOTUS

RESET EP

Warp/UK/12

Another young Jedi set for great things, Flylo clearly has his own unique and recognizable sound: heavily compressed, warm, textured beats that still give you neck ache. Not just trading in boom-bap 95s either—as this EP demonstrates—he is interested in pushing the envelope of electronic music whilst keeping the groove, feel, and essence that makes us tick. From the very sick head-nodder "Massage Situation" to the futuristic "Spicy Sannich" to the uptempo "Dancefloor Stalker" to the mellow vocal cut "Tea Leaf Dancers," this collection of tunes is a vision of the future that only makes us want to get there faster. *Benji B*

### DEETRON FEAT. OVASOUL 7

"I CLING"

white/UK/CD-R

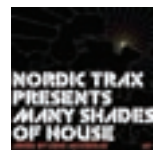
Not sure what the label or release info is on this one. All I know is that this tune has been one of the biggest records in my box this year. Always a pleasure when the deeper tunes are able to make big crowds move. Best moment for this tune was watching 8000 people go mad to it outdoors at Sonar by Night. Good vocals, subtle production, big bottom end—the way we like it! *Benji B*

## LawnChair Generals Around The Block



Available in stores + Online November 2007

Around The Block is the long-awaited compilation from LawnChair Generals of all their best tracks and legendary remixes, seamlessly mixed together by LCG themselves. Check out LCG on tour this Fall with dates in Calgary, Chicago, Denver, Montreal, New York, Portland, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, Vancouver, Victoria, and more.

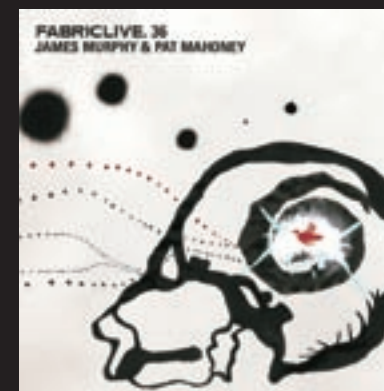


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### Released Nov 20th

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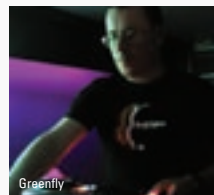
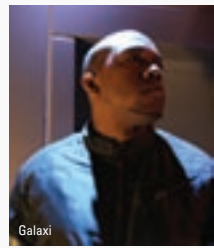
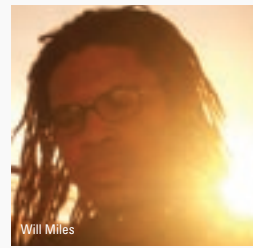
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**Fast Forward**  
**By Method One**  
 EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF DRUM & BASS



While the majority of drum & bass is still based on the reliable 12" single, many artists and labels have been stepping up their game with killer full-length albums. For this month's column, I have to mention two new long-players that are sure to find themselves on the shopping lists of many. First up: *Endangered Species*, the long-awaited album from the boys of **Black Sun Empire** on their eponymous label. Featuring contributions from heavy hitters **Nosia**, **SKC**, **D.Kay**, **State of Mind**, **Chris.SU**, and more, *Endangered Species* delivers the epic tech-y goodness you would expect from BSE, but in jumbo quantities. Though vinyl fans are sure to be happy with the triple-pack set, be sure to check out the CD version with extra tracks and a bonus DJ mix.

A lot of folks have been waiting patiently for the release of *Form & Function Vol. 2*, the latest album from the legendary **Photek**. This is one of those albums that seems to offer a little bit for everyone: In addition to a handful of brand-new tracks, big remixes from **Tech Itch** and **DJ Die & Clipse** are sure to get the dancefloor rumbling. But, in this old-timer's opinion, the real gems of *FF2* are the so-called "lost" songs "One Nation" and "Saturated Hip Hop"—two massive tracks that, for some reason or another, never got released back in the 1990s.

For those who want to know what's new in the non-album world, there's plenty to choose from. **Kubiks** makes his debut on Full Frequency Recordings with a standout single. "Flashback" features all the deep liquid sounds you would expect from Kubiks, with shimmering piano and soul vocals nicely contrasted by big, distorted bass stabs. On the flipside, **Greenfly's** "Outer Rim" gets the Kubiks remix treatment, which deftly balances the original's spacey vibe with a more straightforward dancefloor focus.

If you long for the glory days of atmospheric drum & bass, be sure to check out the new releases coming from Advection Music. The Advection crew takes the long-lost sound of

classic Good Looking and gives it an intriguing modern update with lush synths and loads of reverb. The first release, **Tidal's** "Gemini Force" b/w "Wisdom Tunnels," is available now. Hold tight for the upcoming "Black Hole" by San Francisco producer **Galaxi**.

Going from the smooth to the rough, **Gridlok's** Project 51 Recordings continues its winning streak with a smashing new 12" from **Bulletproof**. "Bunkerbuster" starts off the ride with a crushing beat-and-bass attack, complemented by filtered old-school stabs. On the other side, Bulletproof collaborates with **Teknik** for the heavy-hitting "Smashpalace." For those of you who want your beats hard enough to break concrete, P51 is where you should be looking.

So much great music has been coming out of Budapest lately that it's almost impossible to keep up with it all. But a good place to look would be the Tactile Vinyl Label, which has a big single on-deck with **Tactile**, **Hydro**, and **Munk's** "Existenz," balanced by **Spinline** and Hydro's "Chain Reaction" on the b-side. Both tunes are heavy and just right for the dancefloor, but with enough interesting details to make them work outside the club as well.

And, finally, we come to... Richmond, Virginia? Yes, the capital of the Confederacy gets some love in the form of the new single by **Will Miles** on **Fabio's** Creative Source label. "Summer Rain" and "Turn This Way" are both soulful liquid rollers that will make even the coldest November night seem a little more cozy.



**Reggae Rewind**  
**By Ross Hogg**  
 THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON DANCEHALL, DUB, ROOTS, AND LOVERS ROCK



First things first: You knew that when **Elephant Man** signed to Bad Boy, he'd still do things his way, but could you ever have foreseen that he'd name his new LP *Let's Get Physical?* America is officially not ready for the Energy God.

Speaking of veterans with new albums, **Mr. Vegas** just released *Hot It Up* (Delicious Vinyl), a disc filled with his recent bangers, most notably his current hit single "Tek Weh Yuhself." How big is this song? Well, it also made the cut for the new *Biggest Ragga Dancehall Anthems 2007* (Greensleeves), alongside **Beenie Man's** "Back It Up," **QQ's** "Tek It to Them (Rum Ram)," **Busy Signal's** "These Are the Days," and many more.

And **Assassin** just dropped *Gully Sit'n* (VP), a solid album that features, among others, "Sissy," Assassin's contribution to the new Silver Screen riddim (Don Corleon). Silver Screen also serves up raw tunes from **Baby Cham**, **Capleton**, and **T.O.K.**

In other riddim roundup news, the Madness riddim (Birchill) from longtime **Shaggy** collaborator **Christopher Birch** chugs along at 145 bpm with appropriately hype offerings from Elephant Man, **Macka Diamond**, **Tami Chynn**, **Sean Paul** (whose "Pick It Up and Drop It" picks up where "Watch Dem Roll" dropped off), and T.O.K., who achieves an almost Nocera-esque vibe on "Summertime."

The Sour Diesel riddim (Stainless), somewhat reminiscent of 2005's Sweat riddim, busts big with dancefloor fillers from Sean Paul, **Ms. Thing**, **Monsta Twins**, and **Sizzla**, whose "Yaahdie" features a clean version with "Brrrr!" as a replacement word for "panties." (I don't know why I find that noteworthy, but I do.)

The 2070s riddim (Big Ship) is the latest offering from **Stephen McGregor**. It marks a definite departure from his Power Cut and Tremor riddims; in fact, it sounds like an amalgam of 1970s soundtrack anthems "Staying Alive" and "Theme From Shaft," and **Leftside and Esco** run with it on "Stamina Man," offering an Austin

Powers-infused track with a *Shaft* take on the hook. **Voicemail** re-interprets Kool and the Gang's "Get Down on It" on a single of the same name, and **Vybz Kartel** draws his inspiration from The Bee Gees "Staying Alive" on the oh-so-dirty "Broke Out Broke Out," in which he poses the musical question, "How yuh pussy so tight?" Classy.

In other news, non-Jamaican white dudes continue to make noise in the reggae world. **Collie Buddz** followed up his anthemic "Come Around" with the absolutely wicked "Blind to You," a direct message to "fuckin' haters." And **Alborosie**, an italy Italian who relocated to Jamaica, is making an impact on global charts with his latest tune, "Kingston Town," on the Shoot Out riddim (John John), the riddim for which **Mykal Rose** voiced the title track. Alborosie also made waves last year with "Herbalist," a ganja-man tune that was banned from Jamaican television and radio stations. He's very much on his hustle and is working with big names in the industry, so keep an eye on him.

And finally, **Munga** helps to confirm all the predictions that he will be a major force in reggae for years to come with "The Prayer," a moving single in which he tones down his usual delivery for a heartfelt offering: "If I ever forget to give thanks, Jah please remind me/If I ever get lost, please find me." He's long been a member of Capleton's David House, and with tunes like this, he's well on his way to following in Capleton's footsteps.

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Percee P

It was a sorry excuse for an epiphany, but I'll take what I can get. There I was, hiding from a fierce afternoon downpour and digging through the dollar bins at Reckless Records on N. Clark in Chicago when it reared its tousle-haired head: Night Ranger's *Midnight Madness* LP. I was instantly transported to the warm memories of a hundred county fairs, afternoons at Lake Berryessa, and spinning at weddings on the Sacramento Delta and ranches in the Sierra foothills. "Sister Christian" would be mine once again. DJing was fun, and silly, and nothing was out of bounds. It put a goofy smile on my face, and for the first time in a while, I couldn't wait for my next gig.

**1. THUNDERTRUCK "BENDING THE SPOON"**

MobBeats/US/12  
Leave it to some of San Francisco's Green Gorilla nutters to freak a Spoon track into one of the hottest bootlegs of the year. Rock breaks and space bass will rule your world. And did I mention the Led Zeppelin disco re-edit on the flip?

**2. PERCEE P "WATCH YOUR STEP FEAT. VINNIE PAZ & GUILTY SIMPSON"**

Stonesthrow/US/12  
These cats brutalize a rumbling Madlib beat, flowing seamlessly over a buttery string loop with slow-motion fury. Menacing but mesmerizing. "I'm on edge, nigga—watch yo' step!"

**3. FLYING LOTUS RESET EP**

Warp/UK/12EP  
Future soul and heavy, dubby hip-hop beats from L.A. Check "Tea Leaf Dancers," featuring the shimmering vocals of Andreyra Triana, for a taste of the forthcoming full-length. Something for the J Dilla/Sa-Ra set.

**4. MAC DRE "GO DOOKIE WIT IT"**

US/download  
The man, the myth drops line after line of classic Bay raps over a slapping proto-hyphy beat. Find it.

**5. NEON NEON "TREAT FOR TREAT"**

Lex/UK/12  
Neon Neon is producer Boom Bip and Super Furry Animals singer Gruff Rhys, teaming up with folks like Spank Rock (on this track), Yo Majesty, and Fat Lip. The resulting electro-terrorism is built for the dancefloor and should induce many hipsters' sweaty nights.

**6. SHANTEL DISKO PARTIZANI**

Crammed/BEL/CD  
I can't get enough of the Mediterranean sound (that's my peoples!), and Shantel does the traddy stuff well ("Koupes," "Andante Levante," "Immigrant Child") while incorporating newer dancefloor sounds on cuts like "Susuleker" and "Dubstar Bugarskji." Viva la melting pot!

**7. VAN HUNT "TURN MY TV ON"**

Blue Note/US/12  
Dirty Prince-era funk mixed with some '80s new-wave vibes on the a-side, while things take a modern, bouncing edge with "The Lowest 1 of My Desires" on the flip. Sexy, new-school soul for the club, car, or bedroom.

**8. NICKNACK "BEAT DROP"**

Super Bro-Crowd Control/US/12  
Austin's funkiness shines through yet again with NickNack's snappy production. "Aqui En La Playa" sets things off in a nice Latin-lounge mode before "Sugar Shack" gets things moving with its bass-and-drum-driven grooves. But it's the mutant electro-funk of the title track that really stands out like a bobcat on a saguaro—vocal samples and scratching over a wicked Too \$hort synth line and a stuttering kick. I don't know whether to order another drink or lie in the desert and look for UFOs.

**9. ARCHETYPE BLEED FOR THEM**

Dekagon/US/CD  
Why can't more hip-hop guys be real? I mean, if you grew up in a cow town in Montana, why on earth would you want to rap about Crips and whips? These Archetype cats are from Lawrence, Kansas, and I've never been there, but I'd wager their music is a pretty good approximation of life in that town. It's smooth and warm and open (dare I say "tree-lined"?), sometimes loping along at a lazy pace, but always with a lovely underlying sense of jazz and soul. "Keep It Comin'" and "Freakin' Out" are gems.

**10. L.A.'S FINEST SAMPLER EP**

Top Nation/US/12EP  
Fresh sounds from Los Angeles, featuring guest appearances by Myka9, 2Mex, and Planet Asia. Check out "Fresh Air" and the Havoc-produced "The West." Hot.

**11. DETANATOR KEMREXX "NOVA"**

US/MP3  
Oakland legend of walls, garments, and design (G.O. crew, iii Design) comes correct with a rocking breakbeat workout that sounds somehow like a cross between Nick Cave and DJ Food. Respect and cocktails, my man.

**12. MANATELLA FASHIONABLE NEIGHBORHOOD**

Carlydog/US/CD  
Lovely Americana sounds for that Sunday drive home from the beach.

**LUCKY 13) PORTLAND**

US/city  
With killer spots like Rontoms and Rotture, and about a gazillion choices for music each night, it's no surprise where all the cool kids keep disappearing to. Big ups to Manatee, Tad from Chunk666, and the ZooBombers for all the bike love.



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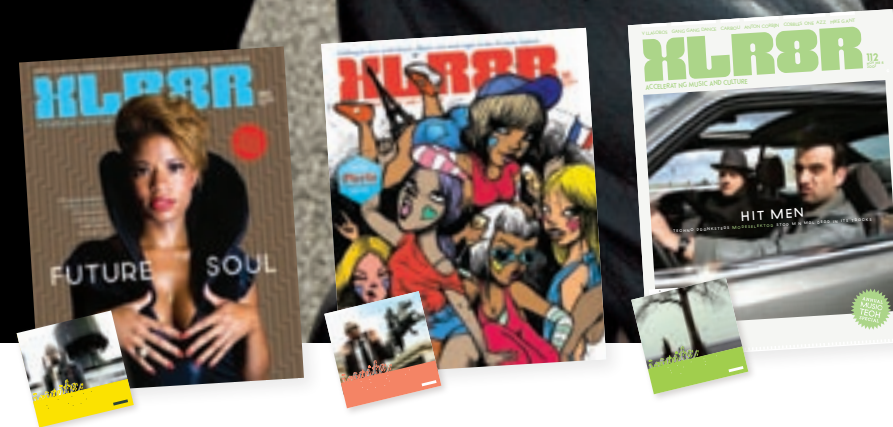


PHOTO: BIRGIT KAUFUSS

# VIS-ED: MIKE GIANT

ORNATE HANDSTYLES AND HOT CHOLAS FROM THE HEART OF THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST.

WORDS MAX HERMAN  
IMAGES MIKE GIANT

Mike Giant's art has been applied worldwide onto walls, trains, skin, skateboards, and sneakers, among other atypical canvases. While his graffiti as "Giant One" and his designs for Think skateboards brought him his first fame, these days it's his fine art that earns him international solo shows from Paris to Melbourne.

Giant is inspired by everything from his Catholic upbringing in Albuquerque, New Mexico to electronic music to skin art; indeed, his clean and crisp black-and-white drawings—featuring heavily inked Madonnas in prayer, pirate ships sailing the high seas, and serpent-entwined skulls—often resemble tattoo flash. He's also known for his facility with fonts, moving effortlessly between bubble letters, cholo script, and ornate calligraphy.

As he documents on his blog at [www.fecalface.com](http://www.fecalface.com), putting pen to paper isn't the only thing keeping him busy—when he's not riding his fixie in the desert heat, he's found time to design custom kicks, a lowrider-inspired Scion, and exclusive apparel for San Francisco brand Rebel8. Regardless of the medium, though, Mike is most concerned with keeping his art as public as possible.

[www.mikegiant.com](http://www.mikegiant.com)

## You recently retired from tattooing. Why?

I got tired of dealing with clients, blood, tons of equipment, and shop bullshit. I make more money with Rebel8 and fine art now, so why break my back and hands tattooing? I'm done. I still love tattoos, and I continue to get tattoos, but it just doesn't make sense for me to do it anymore.

## Another longtime artistic outlet for you is graffiti.

### What did you learn from writing graf that you have been able to apply to your other work?

The idea of "getting up" has been a pretty fundamental drive for me as an artist. As a writer, I try to get my name up as much as possible. As an artist, I try to use that same mentality to get my work into the public eye. Also, writing graffiti taught me that I can't covet the things I paint because they could get painted over the following morning. Same goes for my drawings now. As soon as a piece is done, I let it go.

### How often do you write graffiti nowadays and do you still get the same feeling?

My little hometown is very anti-graffiti, so it just isn't safe to write here. The police know me. I mostly paint when I'm traveling these days. I particularly enjoy painting in Europe. It's a lot more fun over there.

### Much of your fine art seems to be inspired by Catholicism and Day of the Dead imagery. To what do you credit that influence?

Growing up in New Mexico. The Day of the Dead is one of many great local traditions that continue to thrive here. Every year around Halloween, the sugar skulls and altars start appearing. It's just something that's always been around, like green chile and *sopapillas*.

### How has being back in Albuquerque affected the way you work?

I think the local influence is more apparent in my work as far as subject matter and style, but the way I work has



RIGHT  
*Amor*, Mike Giant exclusive for  
XLR8R Vis-Ed, 2007





remained unchanged for a long time. Living in a town like this, where there's not much to do, keeps me busy in the studio. I feel like I've been more productive here than in San Francisco.

**What are some of your favorite places to go in Albuquerque?**

I go to Bagel Joe's almost every morning for the only real bagels in Albuquerque. Highly recommended. I love \$2 margarita Tuesdays at Los Cuates. I try to support the local indie movie theatre, The Guild, as much as possible. My favorite place to drink and play pool is Anodyne. Albuquerque is also full of concrete flood-control channels that I love to ride my bike in. Riding the ditches is my favorite shit lately.

**How else does it compare to living in San Francisco?**

Albuquerque is stupid cheap. You wouldn't believe it. We have full seasons here, which I dig, but the summers are fucking blazing hot. Albuquerque is really spread out, so you can't really walk anywhere. The live music scene here is pretty dead. I miss seeing shows in S.F. a few times a week; same goes for clubbing. I wish there was an Endup [an S.F. afterhours club] in Albuquerque. The food here is awesome, but I miss the variety in S.F.

**Given your love of track bikes, how has Albuquerque been for riding?**

Since Albuquerque is so spread out, I get in a lot more miles here. There are lots of

bike trails and bike lanes that keep me out of traffic, and plenty of roads I can sprint on safely. Also, because of the high altitude, my lungs get a lot stronger up here. On the downside, drivers here are not used to seeing cyclists on the road at all, so I have to be extra cautious. The drivers here are the worst I've ever seen. I see drivers breaking basic rules of the road every day. The heat is a killer too. Riding in 100-plus temperatures is no fun.

**Can you talk about meditation and the role that plays in your artistic process?**

Meditation practice allows me to clear my mind of discursive thoughts so that I am responding from a place of calm and fluidity. In that space, I feel like I can observe my "self" in the act of creating. I just let it go and see what happens. And at the same time, because my mind is focused on "doing" rather than "thinking," I have much greater control and patience.

**How much does hip-hop, old-school jungle, and other music you dig inspire you?**

It's the soundtrack of my life. It's art, the medium of sound. I think if you looked at my drawings and heard what I was listening to as I created the piece, you'd get a better feel for the drawing. The sound of drums keeps my head nodding all day in the studio.

**What albums have been a motivational force for you lately?**

This month, I've been really feeling a mix CD I got a while back: *Fabric 15: Tyrant Mixed by Craig Richards*. It's laid-back, but it's got a really nice groove. I just got some newer Fat Jon stuff that I love. As far as downtempo beats goes, Fat Jon is my favorite. I love the beats he's done for Five Deez. They rule. Madlib's work is really inspirational as well, especially his jazz projects.

FAR LEFT  
Collage, 2007

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT  
Sickness, 2007  
Bombed, 2007  
Lowrider, 2007  
Pray, 2007



Words Tony Ware

Illustration Colin Strandberg

## MUSIC FOR THE MASSES

MP3 BLOGS HASTEN THE SEARCH FOR THE NEXT BIG THING.

The term "post-rock" initially referred to the way non-traditional use of guitars and drums revitalized indie rock. Nowadays, "post" could just as likely mean an MP3 blog entry, and the "rock"... well, that's subjective. Music has gone from being heavily distilled by journalists agonizing over every prefix to being immediately offered up on the internet as a daily fix. This democratization has created a new online currency: a potential arms race for exclusive soundbites and—maybe more importantly—cool points.

Labels now know it, and are increasingly taking control of sharing their MP3s. Vice Records directly services as many music blogs as possible, with the hope that by acting as middle man it can leave artists to be creative and not get tangled in promotions. And well-publicized tune purveyors like Music for Robots and Big Stereo appreciate the mutual respect, seeing their MP3 blogs not as a free-for-fall for leaking material but as a filter for highlighting the best music in a responsible way.

"Sometimes a blog is such a huge fan of one of our artists," says Adam Farrell of the Beggars Group, which controls everyone from 4AD to Matador, "[that] we might give them a heads-up that we've posted something [in our online forum]... But we really implore them to tone down the 'exclusive' or 'premiere' crap," he says, noting that within minutes those songs might also appear elsewhere.

For many, the idea of exclusivity hardly applies. "For the most part, music bloggers are not generating any original content," says Al Shipley, who runs the blog Government Names. "It's usually just an MP3 and a sentence under it, and that's not really much to get possessive about." Government Names partially counters that problem by tightly focusing on a specialized area of

coverage: Baltimore hip-hop, club, and R&B. Its offerings aren't "exclusive," just less exposed.

Others use the buckshot approach. "I find a producer I really like, and I'll post as many of their remixes as I can find," says KissAtlanta's Preston Craig. "That way, when people search the internet for one of any 10 artists, they find us."

In the case of Sweden's beat depot Discobelle, DJs and producers provide some of that dubiously termed "original content," in the form of DJ mixes. As well, brand new remixes may be found on France's dance hybrid-heavy FluoKids blog and Palms Out Sounds, which has become known for "Remix Sunday" and "Sample Wednesday." (The culture of remixing, and remixing remixes has helped fuel many MP3 blogs in an electro-pop direction.)

Ultimately, many of the blogs aspire to take Shipley's concept of exclusive content to its logical end (or is that beginning?). "I see the blogs as potentially the best new venues to promote *very* new artists," says Palms Out's Haldan Blecher, who has a 12" release forthcoming. "So while it used to be labels like Dim Mak or Def Jux that would put out the first couple singles of an artist before they went to a major, I could see it becoming blog labels that put out the first single, and indies taking over after that."

governmentnames.blogspot.com, fluokids.blogspot.com, www.kissatlanta.com, palmsout.blogspot.com, www.discobelle.net, www.musicforrobots.com

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